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THE

WALL'S END MINER;

OR

A BRIEF MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE OF WILLIAM CRISTER:

INCLUDING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CATASTROPHE OF JUNE 18th, 1835.

BY JAMES EVERETT,

AUTHOR OF

"EDWIN," "THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH," ETC.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY T. MASON AND G. LANE,

For the Methodist Episcopal Church, at the Conference Office, 200 Mulberry-street.

J. Collord, Printer.

1838.

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CONTENTS TO WALL'S END MINER.

CHAPTER I.

Providence and grace—The birth and parentage of the subject of the memoir—He is left an orphan—Sent early to the collieries—Meets with a pit accident—His affection for his foster-mother—Exemption from gross immorality—Is playfully mischievous—The gayety of his disposition—Enters a rifle corps—Is distinguished in the band—Invited to a class meeting—Conviction—Conversion—Learns to read—Suffers through his connection with the army. Page 9

CHAPTER II.

His person—His mind—Natural character—An apology for his language and metaphors—Is partial to life rmth in religion—His love of class meeting—Is tly eccentric—His method of overcoming temptation—Takes by surprise—His conduct in social ings, in aid of his leader. 23

CHAPTER III.

Visits the chamber of the sick—Faith—His peculiar mode of pleading the promises—Brings a mariner to class—Individuality in prayer—His manner of beginning the Sabbath—Love of the Scriptures—Partiality to prayer meetings—Power in acting and painting—Startling effects of his conduct to juvenile transgressors in the pit—A sudden hell—Delights to set the minds of others imperceptibly afloat on different subjects—Listens to the voice of prayer—Is a nursing father to young converts—His anxiety for the salvation of sinners—A revival. 43

CHAPTER IV.

Love-feast addresses—Enlargement of soul—Caution in reference to love feasts—Preparation for heaven, under the similitude of waiting for a stage coach—His use of Scripture narrative—Occasional conduct in love-feasts and fellowship meetings—The recognition of saints in heaven—Is a publisher of glad tidings—A characteristic stroke on preaching—His love of Christian ministers—Imposes silence on false reasoning—Wild fire—The superiority of deeds to words—Encouragement to expectants—Life a journey—Sudden illumination—The ready reception of a blessing—Comprehensive views—Perseverance and malignity of Satan

—The destruction of sin necessary to religious prosperity—Power over the devil. 66

CHAPTER V.

Progress in piety—His usual place of retirement—Answers to prayer—Prays for the preachers—Conversions—He is not to be taken in all things as a model—His exemption from frivolity—A peculiarity in his conceptions—His conduct under severe providential dispensations—Personal affliction—Attempts to do good in a pecuniary way--His benevolence of character--Grateful acknowledgments—He aids a poor widow—A love feast—Singing—A dream—Mr. Bramwell—A garden. 89

CHAPTER VI.

A few of his last days—Visit to one of his daughters—Has a prayer-meeting in a field—Receives his last ticket—Remarkable expressions—Attends the bed of the dying—The spirit of prayer—Family worship—Descends the pit for the last time.—The CATASTROPHE—Religious aspect of the subject—Extent of the calamity—The rapidity with which the fire moved—Kindness, mixed with severity—The guilty spared—A merciful providence in the timing of the event—The general distress occasioned. 113

CHAPTER VII.

The Catastrophe continued—Pleasing indications of a preparation for another world in some of the juvenile sufferers—The Scriptures—Prayer preferred to necessary food—Sunday-school teachers' festival, and its painful associations—Extorted confessions, and knowledge of character—Exemplification of Christian fortitude and resignation in the bereaved—Unruffled repose—Agony blended with tenderness—Painful disappointment—The mother and the Christian—Agonizing reflections--Sources of consolation—Circumstances heightening the distress consequent on the loss of life, in the widow and the fatherless—Despair—Consequences of the disfigured state of some of the bodies. 131

CHAPTER VIII.

Brief extracts from a journal of events—Preparations for descent—Discoveries—Four persons found alive—Their state—Funeral ceremonies—A general visitation—Character of eight young men and boys—Sudden glory—Respect paid to Crister—Position in which he was found—Thomas Reaveley—Joseph Lawson—A Christian Sabbath and its duties—Concern for the young—Use of the whole. 148

PREFACE

TO

THE WALL'S END MINER.

To persons remote from the scene where the subject of the following pages spent his days, and also unacquainted with its local history, it may be stated that "*Wall's End*" is situated on the north side of the Tyne, in the county of Northumberland, immediately on the main road leading from Newcastle to Shields, and is about four miles, being an equal distance, from each place. The name is derived from the famous wall built by the Emperor Severus, A. D. 207, which stretched across the country, passed through the site of the present town of Newcastle, and here terminated its eastern course. The wall itself was constructed of square stones—was twelve feet high and eight broad—and was every way, except on the edges of precipices, accompanied by a deep ditch or foss. The site of this wall, and the hollow of the foss, running parallel with the present turnpike-way, are still to be traced from Byker-Hill mill to the first milestone on the Shields road; and a fragment of the wall itself is still to be

seen near the bridge over Denton Burn, a little west of Newcastle.

But apart from Roman history, and independent of any knowledge of its association with the place, the "Wall's End" *coal* has been long famed for its excellent quality; so much so, indeed, that coal-dealers have been detected in a fraudulent use of the name in the market,—pushing off under its sanction an inferior article. In this excellent mine, the subject of the present memoir was long employed; and the products of his toil warmed many a metropolitan hearth, from the cottage to the palace, and from the kitchen to the drawing room,—his own heart being often heated to intensity with the love of God, while in the midst of his numerous aspirations to Heaven the material was passing through his horn-worked hands.

Several objections were presented to the writer's mind on first taking up the subject—objections much more discouraging than those which operated in the case of "The Village Blacksmith"—a work the success of which has exceeded any thing he could possibly have anticipated, and for which he expresses his gratitude both at the bar of criticism and to an indulgent public. For though the son of Vulcan was far his inferior in intellect, and might have kept his *forge* at work with the Tyne-Side miner's *materials*,—preserving his own native warmth in full vigour, as did "Peter," in company with "the servants

and officers, who had made a fire of coals," before which they "stood;" and at which "they warmed themselves," yet he was invested with more associate circumstances, characters, and scenes, than his humble follower, on many of which depends a considerable portion of the interest of the narrative. The miner was too much *localized* to admit of variety arising from a change of society and of place; in a description of which the reader often experiences more enjoyment than the actual spectator. The want of *office*, too, on which public character takes its stand, leading to various associations, as well as to intellectual development, was another defect. Hence it was, that the writer saw before him a narrative of *sayings*, rather than of *doings;* and felt a danger of being hemmed within the limits of a bare delineation of *character*, rather than that of having the privilege of expatiating at large over the whole course of a richly varied *life*.

He recollected, however, that he had a candid and intelligent religious public to deal with,—persons who would look for no more from a miner than what the character of his circumstances would admit; who would never look for the refinement of manners from the cottager which might reasonably be expected from the courtier—for the same knowledge from the uneducated plebeian as from the man of learning—or who would hope to see a prince in manners, and a Solomon in wisdom,

without promise or preparation, starting into existence out of a collier. Taste, perhaps, rather than judgment—as in the case of particular artists, led the writer to decide upon his subject. He always prefers the thatched cottage in ruin, to the stately villa, trimmed and squared, for pictorial effect; and the rude cascade to the polished stream. When he laid hold of his subject, he found him an *original* of his *kind;* and an original of *any* kind, whether in prose or verse, in science or mechanics, in the hamlet or in the city, will present some points of interest which may be considered peculiar, and claimed as personal property. An estate may be fertile, though not large; and a garden will present as many beauties, and create as lively an interest, as a wide monotonous heath, distinguished only for its sterility. Here the candid reader will find a garden—not of flowers barely, but of fruit; and though the inheritor was poor, the crop may be viewed as rich for heaven. If the writer should have been in error respecting the quality, the judicious reader will be able to detect, as the candid, it is hoped, will be disposed to bear with the mistake.

J. E.

Newcastle, Sept. 17*th,* 1835.

WALL'S END MINER.

CHAPTER I.

Providence and grace—The birth and parentage of the subject of the memoir—He is left an orphan—Sent early to the collieries—Meets with a pit accident—His affection for his foster-mother—Exemption from gross immorality—Is playfully mischievous—The gayety of his disposition—Enters a rifle corps—Is distinguished in the band—Invited to a class meeting—Conviction—Conversion—Learns to read—Suffers through his connection with the army.

MINERS and mariners are among those classes in society who, in their lawful occupations, are much more exposed to sudden death, in the various perils by which they are surrounded, than others; and it is a fact, in the history of Wesleyan Methodism, which ought not to be overlooked, that God, in infinite mercy, directed the attention of its extraordinary founder, at the earliest period, first to the *colliers* of Kingswood, and next to those on the Tyne and the Wear,—taking a stride, so to speak, from one extremity of the land to the other,—leaving thickly populated districts unvisited between,—and thus, to persons in the *greatest danger*, offering the only means of *everlasting safety*. However this feature of divine Providence may be viewed by others, to a person divinely enlightened, the subject will come with a pecu-

liarly impressive power to the heart; and no one, possessed of genuine Christian philanthropy, but must exult in the more than usual harvest reaped for the garner of God among this death-exposed race of industrious men. The same Being who has so often met them in the terrors of his Providence has, in this instance, met them in the riches of his grace—amply compensating the perils of the one in the blessings of the other.

William Crister, who was born in the Close, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in the county of Northumberland, December 26th, 1779, was a trophy of no ordinary worth, among thousands of others, who graced the triumphs of the Redeemer, while following his steps upon earth. His father was a bass-maker, and had six children in all, of whom William was the youngest. His mother, when he was about eighteen months old, was seized with an illness which soon terminated in her dissolution; not long after which, his father also died. The mother, during her illness, requested a friend to take care of William; and that friend, kindly acceding to the request, removed him to the collieries, where he was brought up in the lowly walks of life.

When in the seventh year of his age he was sent to work in the pit at Bigge's Main; and having laboured there the space of four years, the family with whom he resided removed to Wall's End Colliery, whither he accompanied them, and in which he was

employed the remainder of his days. While at Bigge's Main, he had a narrow escape when at work; for so near was the fire, during the explosion, that it drove some small pieces of coal into his face, the blue marks of which he carried with him to the end of his pilgrimage.

The family, under whose roof he was reared, treated him with great affection, and his orphan heart clung with equal tenderness and gratitude to his foster-mother. He was advised, when he grew up, to quit the house by those who ought to have known better, and to appropriate his wages to his own use. But he had too tender a nature cruelly to abandon old age, and too deep a sense of the kindness received to forget it. When the woman was sick to whom he had looked up as to a mother, he provided whatever was within the range of his power for her comfort, and gave her the whole of his earnings as long as she lived. With this family he continued till he was about one and twenty years of age, when he entered into the marriage state; remaining from eight to nine years more an utter stranger to experimental religion.

Previously to his marriage, he was distinguished for a decent morality, for honesty and industry; nor less so when he was surrounded by a family of his own. He was sportive rather than vicious,—would have raised the laugh rather than have produced the tear by imparting pain,—and would have led the way to harmless amusement rather

than have followed in the wake of crime. As a key to character, it may be stated that when he found a neighbour's door open, and the house without an inmate, he would have stepped in unperceived, and would have concealed in one of the most unlikely places to look for it, either some article of value, or something likely to be wanted for immediate use ; watching the while for the return of the careless absentee, in order to observe the workings of the mind, to see the first surprise or fear, and to furnish an opportunity of exercising affected sympathy in the presumed loss. This led to occasional falsehood, which his unenlightened mind placed to the account of innocent amusement. After he had amused himself some time, with demure look, and soft speech, he would then point to the place of concealment—turn upon his heel with a laugh—and leave them as much overjoyed with the discovery as vexed with his folly,—the persons often sending after him the nearest article they could hurl without serious injury to either. An unoccupied house—though but for a moment—would have been deemed a favourable occasion by the unprincipled for purposes of plunder ; but though destitute of the fear of God, Crister was honest to man.

The natural gayety of his spirit, and benevolence of his disposition, leading him more into the company of the facetious than the facinorous, he was consequently less exposed

than many around him to the effects of profane habits. No society was allowed to be sad in his presence. Having considerable wit and fancy of his own—being generally on the look-out for the droll, quaint, smart sayings of others—and possessing what, in humble life, might be deemed considerable facundity, he was very often the harlequin of the persons with whom he associated, and was sure to renovate the flagging attention and overworked spirits of any who might be disposed to sink.

One circumstance which contributed not a little to his notoriety in his unrenewed state was the establishment of a corps of riflemen, during the continental struggle, of which Mr. Buddle was captain, and in the band of which Crister alternately beat the great drum, and amused himself with the tambarine. Though an adept in handling both instruments, yet it was in the use of the latter he particularly excelled; and being exceedingly flexile, active, and varied, in his numerous evolutions,—employing the heel, the toe, the knee, the forehead, the chin, the back part of the head, the shoulder, the elbow, knuckles, and fingers,—passing from one to another, and from one extremity to the other, with the utmost ease, rapidity, and grace, he attracted immense crowds to see his performance. While others delighted the ear with their music, Crister fixed the eye by his antics,—the music itself appearing very often a

mere accompaniment to an exhibition in which he stood as the chief actor. But though extremely partial to music, and almost living in its sound, he was never able to read it. His ear was quick and good; and he would have caught a tune as expeditiously, and fixed it nearly as permanently, as a person could have committed it to paper.

William Kennedy, who was anxious to promote the moral and religious welfare of his fellow-creatures, pressed his own brother Thomas, and W. Crister, to accompany him to Mr. Reay's class, which met in the house of the latter, at Carville. They both complied; and though Crister entered the room a perfect stranger to the odiousness and criminality of moral evil, he left it with a deep concern for the salvation of his soul; and continued a member of the class to the day of his death—a period of about twenty-six years, having united himself to it, January 17th, 1809. He had attended preaching at Carville Chapel some time previously to this, and manifested more than usual thoughtfulness, which induced W. Kennedy to give him the invitation. But still he remained unscathed in conscience. Here, however, the "scales" fell from his eyes; he beheld himself in "a horrible pit of miry clay;" and, what was worse, he found that the bottom of the pit constituted the lid which opened to the mouth of hell. From thence, he sent up his piercing wailings to heaven, and "the Lord

inclined unto" him, "and heard" his "cry." The "coals of juniper," remarkable for their intense heat, had entered the soul. Conviction raged like a fire within, and drank up his spirits. His vivacity forsook him; and he wept for very anguish of soul.

His repentance was deep and genuine, but not of long continuance, as to its "weepings and wailings;" for in a few weeks he obtained a clear sense of his acceptance with God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

He fixed the eye of his soul upon a crucified Redeemer; by which act he was raised out of the "horrible pit of miry clay," in which he had found himself so deeply plunged,—and which may be illustrated by a dream which a person had, who, like himself, was in search of salvation. The person in question dreamed, according to statement, that he lay at the bottom of a coal pit, without the least apparent possible way of escape. After remaining in that state some time, he turned his eye up the shaft, and saw a small circle of the dark blue heavens. While looking with despondency, and yet wistfully, for some time, a beautiful star appeared, stealing out of the deep azure above,—rendering that azure still more deep as its own rays became more beautifully bright. This luminary stood directly over him; and one of his first thoughts was—"This is the Star of Bethlehem." In the act of gazing upon it, with some degree of admiration, he

thought he felt its attractive influence, and was by almost imperceptible degrees raised toward the day. By some mishap, he lost sight of it, and fell; and on looking upward again, it had disappeared. He lay, and mourned his wretchedness,—wishing for its re-appearance. After a short time had elapsed, it again stole through the gloom, and stood over him as lovely as before. Again he gazed with intensity—again he felt its attractive force—and again he arose. But the eye once more betrayed its trust—and that moment he fell. His distress was proportionally great; and what seemed to augment it was, he despaired, while in the very act of longing, looking, and watching, of ever again being favoured with a gleam of its rays. It once more, however, refreshed his vision. He looked—he rose—the eye was true—he reached the top—and awoke in an ecstacy.—Thus it was with Crister. He beheld Jesus, as the bright, the Morning Star,—as "the Star of Jacob," rising on the darkness of human nature, and shedding his healing beams upon the lost sons of Adam. Faith was represented to him under the notion of attentively viewing an object, and he was accosted in the Bible with, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." He was taught that though the brazen serpent was lifted up, it was only available, in its healing influence, to those who looked upon it. He was taught, also, that the *virtue* was not

so much in the *serpent* as in the *look*. Here he was able to perceive a difference between the *type* and the *anti-type ;* for he found real virtue in Christ—but still that virtue only went out of him, in proportion as he *looked* upon him with the *eye*, or *laid hold* of him by the *hand* of faith. He stretched forth his arm, in pursuance of the last figure of speech, as he had often done at the bottom of the shaft, and, empty-handed, laid hold of the mercy of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, as upon a golden chain, and maintained his hold of the last link till it drew him up to heaven. The Lord, in the expressive language of Elihu, brought "back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living;" and in the farther figurative language of the psalmist, "set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings." He was now no longer among the "slime pits" in "the vale of Siddim." He had firm footing.

The room in which the class met, was afterward converted into a shop; and with that room he had many agreeable associations. "I can go," he would say, "to the very spot where the Lord set my soul at liberty. There is a hogshead of *sugar* now standing upon the place:" a reflection to him much sweeter than the fruit of the cane to the palate, and through which he could look up to heaven with "Abba, Father," dwelling upon his lips, and freedom in his heart. It is a remarkable fact, that some of our best

feelings are revived on our having certain trifling localities brought before the eye. "If an old man," says Foster, "wishes to animate for a moment the languid and faded ideas which he retains of his youth, he might walk with his crutch across the green where he once played with companions who are now probably laid to repose in another spot not far off. An aged saint may meet again some of the affecting ideas of his early piety in the place where he first thought it happy to pray. A walk in a meadow, the sight of a bank of flowers, perhaps even of some one flower in a landscape with the tints of autumn, the descent into a valley, the brow of a mountain, the house where a friend has been met, or has resided, or has died, have often produced a much more lively recollection of our past feelings, and of the objects and events which caused them, than the most perfect description could have done; and we have lingered a considerable time for the pensive luxury of thus resuming the departed state." The sight of the hogshead, which was stationary, reminded Crister years afterward, what took place when kneeling on the boards beneath it.

Not satisfied with his attempts to pray in public at first, and being deficient in confidence, he laboured to conceive a prayer in his mind, and to preserve it in recollection. This he sought to repeat on different occasions; but feeling himself trammelled with

it, and finding it also injurious to the free spirit of prayer, he laid it aside, and depended upon the spontaneous effusions of the moment: remarking, that he "walked by the aid of a *crutch* at first, but was soon able to go alone."

Being extremely partial to class meeting, he never, with the exception of *once*, absented himself from church fellowship, unless lawfully detained. At the time alluded to, he was the subject of strong temptation; and instead of going to the meeting, he strolled down the banks of the Tyne. He soon felt that he had *entered into* the temptation; and after much prayer, he *vowed* before the Lord—a vow which he was able to keep to the day of his death, that he would never more give place to Satan on that subject. "If," said he, when cautioning the absentee in social meetings, "those persons who are in the habit of neglecting their classes only felt what I experienced that night, they would vow, like me, never to do so again." He was a perfect model for others, in his attention to the public, social, and private worship of God; and as in his class, so among the free sittings in the chapel, he was always to be found in his place, and would have his own seat, with which he was invariably indulged.

One serious inconvenience under which he laboured was his inability to read. An imperfect knowledge of the *letters* of the

English alphabet was all he had acquired; and in the *thirtieth year* of his age he had to return to childhood, and was seen anxiously pouring over his "Horn Book" and "Tom Thumb," surrounded by his offspring,—looking through these initiatory trifles to the New Testament, and exulting in the hope of one day reaching the fountain of knowledge, and medium of life. By close application, he was soon able to read the sacred page, both in private and in his family; and to exclaim—"I esteem the words of thy mouth more than my necessary food. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired than fine gold; sweeter also than the honey, and the honeycomb." In his first readings, he was like a person entering upon a newly-discovered country; he sat down by the skirts or seat shore of knowledge; but on improving, he entered farther and farther into the interior of the land; till at length, on gaining a small eminence, as it were, he saw the truth of God expanding into a greatness beyond the reach of his own sight, while every thing seemed written as with a sun-beam. The opaque medium was changed for the

transparent; and he beheld with awe, surprise, and admiration the wonders of God's law. The Bible was to him not only a "light to the feet and a lamp to the path," but a kind of sacred Nepenthe, in every moment of discouragement. There he found recipes, to employ the language of the medical student, which proved a cordial to his spirits, and imparted vigour to his arm. "I was born twice," he would say; "once at Newcastle, and another time at Carville. At my second birth, I was as unable to read as at my first; but now, I can not only read my Bible, but my title to heaven."

While he was making progress in knowledge and in piety, there remained one afflicting drawback to his happiness. The rifle corps in which he had figured for several years remained in arms upward of twelve months after his conversion; and various circumstances and arguments concurred to bind him to the band to which he had been linked. It was a season of scruple and tenderness of conscience; he was not well grounded in religion; and his experience and knowledge were ill able to meet the sophisms, temptations, and buffetings, with which he was assailed. The tambarine in the same hand, before and after conversion, seemed altogether another thing; and the eye of the public, as quick to perceive as to associate, was upon him for evil, as it had been upon him for good. The tambarine had been his

idol, and he himself had been the idol of the multitude. Of that idol he was obliged to maintain his hold, when idolatry had ceased; and in the act of handling it, he was not less "ashamed" than the artificer in iron would have been, on receiving a visit from the Prophet Isaiah, while forging idols in his smithy, after his enlightenment, and of whom it is said, "the smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms." Poor Crister had to work on, and to throw around his arms, for the entertainment of others, while the spirit of his employment was entombed within him. It was not like the graver evolution of the regular soldier, or even the more sober and stately march of a person with the bassoon, or of persons with any other dozen of instruments; but the only article in the band that required a harlequin for its management, and in the hand of one who had once been a master, as he had now become a slave. He sighed, he groaned, he prayed, he watched, he blushed, till the dissolution of the corps, when he flew off like a bird escaped from the falcon, or an eagle—on being renewed in strength, toward the sun. Though the divine Being, in his own language—and to keep up the allusion with regard to prophetic times, "created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work;" yet he

did not create him to make idols, and much less to fall down before them. Crister felt, that though God had endowed him with amazing agility, yet it was not to be employed in that way—either for self-idolization, or for the boast of his friends; and that his position and employment had been the occasion of sin, as it was now the cause of much mental distress.

CHAPTER II.

His person—His mind—Natural character—An apology for his language and metaphors—Is partial to life and warmth in religion—His love of class meeting—Is innocently eccentric—His method of overcoming temptation—Takes by surprise—His conduct in social meetings, in aid of his leader.

THERE was nothing remarkably prepossessing in Crister's general appearance. He was about the middle size—rather slender—and had a little of the pitman's gait, which is not less visible to the eye of an observer than that of a tailor. His complexion was between the brown and the pale, but with a few shades more of the latter than the former, and a slight intermixture of the sallow. The face was inclined to the small and the round—rather a disproportionate width across the cheek bones—partially narrowing above and below—but still not so much as to take away the general character of rotundity—

with short, dark, sleek hair. The nose was a little aquiline, the lips rather thin, and the mouth the ordinary size. It was in the eye—dark and sparkling, that the whole of the expression lay, and which showed not only the inner man, but almost continually lit up the countenance with sunshine. It was not large; and yet, when his voice conveyed to the ear the conceptions of the mind, and the impassioned emotions of the heart, it would seem to dilate, and now and then possessed a brilliancy and fascination, from which it was as impossible to turn away as it was difficult steadfastly to behold; differing as much from the calm, cold, and colourless eye, that seems to indicate little short of a delight in human misery, and produces a sensation of fear, as the chiselled marble differs from an object sparkling with all the vivacity of light.

Persons who can penetrate beyond the surface will find, by discoursing with some men, the general truth of a sentiment penned by the writer of the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus—that "a man may be known by his look, (or his eye,) and one that hath understanding by his countenance." Not that we can read in such a tablet what a man shall henceforth be, but what he is at present; and this may be allowed, without the charge of a too superstitious adherence to the art of the metoposcopist. Man has not unaptly been compared to "an harmonious organ," and the more the simile is examined, the more will its

truth appear. It is the heart that tunes and plays it—the tongue that gives utterance in song—and every portion of it, however minute, yields a distinct and appropriate sound, varying the effect agreeably to each varied affection. Nor can it be otherwise; for the separate parts are sustained by the spirits, and the spirits are the genuine issue of the heart. Hence, as the heart is affected with love, joy, sorrow, fear, or hatred, it strikes a different key, and sends forth a different note. When the heart touches one chord, and the tongue makes melody to another, the speech and the countenance are at variance; and the man who cannot perceive such a solecism, and observe the dissonance, may justly accuse his senses of weakness and imperfection. There is no occasion to close in with the absurd maxim—fit only for the blind, and highly seasoned as it is—"That it is necessary to eat a bushel of salt with a man, before you can perfectly understand him." Sincerity is readable anywhere; and hypocrisy is soon detected. As to the immediate subject in hand, the sweet glow of religious feeling in the heart gave a heavenly expression to his countenance, and a melting tenderness to a naturally quick and penetrating eye—imparting a something to each, distinct and undefinable, yet always pleasurable, like the bloom to the fruit and the scent to the flower.

There is not unfrequently connected with

men of uncultivated mind and exuberant fancy, a degree of forwardness and pertness, highly offensive to persons of taste and retired habits. An active mind is generally on the advance, and gives the meeting to persons before they are quite prepared for its outpourings. But though Crister was prompt, he was not obtrusive; though earnest, not bold or impudent; though cheerful, not trifling;—always ready, and yet never forward. There was amazing vivacity; a facility for catching hold of little incidents and passing events, and converting them to religious purposes, either for his own personal improvement in piety, or the advantage of those around him. He gave a person the notion of a swallow on the wing,—darting through the air with ease and rapidity,—and selecting its provision from among the insect tribes, without impeding its flight;—insects in swarms, but often invisible to others than itself. As he was not a regularly authorized public speaker, beyond relating his experience at a love-feast and in his class, the faculty of quickly laying hold of any thing capable of affording nutriment either to the affections or the intelligence, was particularly perceptible in prayer. In this respect, some of his prayers, though exceedingly imperfect as *models*, comprised the substance of powerfully impressive and important *lectures*. He would sometimes web one thought round another—dexterously disentangle the whole—

take them up separately—and then shoot away with them, like so many meteors, one after another, glaring through the midnight heavens; and at other times, more nearly assimilated to the lightning, he would come flash after flash upon the spirit—sudden and startling; and in both cases accompanied with a power and novelty of expression that left the mind in a state of pleasing or painful suspense, according to the subject, and rarely without a fixity of purpose to improve. Fully to enjoy him, however, it was necessary for a person to divest himself occasionally of those little tastes he might have acquired by reading and society: these laid aside, Crister's intellectual character was at once appreciated; his prayers and his converse became a spiritual repast. He was rather of an uncultivated than of a naturally coarse intellectual fibre, and would have admitted both of polish and expansion.

As he had been in his unrenewed state, so he was found in a state of grace,—sparkling and active,—active as fire itself. It is a remark of Locke, that "the divine Being never unmakes the man in forming the Christian." Natural character remains the same,—all the faculties as at the first. The supernatural light which is poured into the mind from above, never extinguishes that which is natural; it will aid, but not destroy it. Every peculiar temperament, as well as mental faculty, is carried into religion. Here is one,

who is naturally gloomy ;—another, with the gayety and cheerfulness of the lark ;—a third, all meekness ;—and a fourth, like a piece of touchwood, instantly in a blaze, on the smallest provocation. The list might be enlarged ; but sufficient is advanced to enable a person to carry out the subject to any given length. Since religion, therefore, does not destroy natural character, but improves and sanctifies it—or, in other words, turns the stream into another channel, or directs the flame to another quarter, hence it is, that we have the same *variety* in the *church* as in the *world.* Peter, who was naturally rash and precipitate, was still forward to every good word and work, on his conversion to God. Saul, who was a fiery bigot, became the zealous apostle—burning with ardour in the cause against which he had breathed out threatenings and slaughter. John, who possessed great tenderness of spirit, could scarcely either speak or write on any other subject, except the love of God to man. If a steady eye be not fixed on natural character, there will not only be no correct portrait of the man, but the whole narrative will associate with those biographies which stand in certain publications like so many tomb-stones in a country church-yard, distinguished chiefly by the *name*, and with little more information to the public, than that the subjects buried beneath a few commonplace remarks —*lived* and *died.* But in cases where the

power of delineation is possessed, while there is just cause of complaint on the one hand, of a cautious reserve, which prevents the whole man from coming into view, there is equal danger of excess, on the other; for artifice is confessed to have become such an embellisher of God's handy-work, that a person dare scarcely be what nature made him, through fear of being counted a *lusus naturæ*. William Crister was a man and a Christian; and like all other trees of the Lord's planting, he bore two kinds of fruit—human and divine.

Some of his similes might seem to demand an apology, because of their familiarity and approach to low life. But there was a keeping in this. Like the prophet Amos, who chose to speak of his own art—having been "among the herdmen of Tekoa," and to select comparisons from rural life, he drew upon the circumstances in which he was placed, and the society in which he was brought up, for purposes of illustration: nor could those who might be disposed to censure him for a want of taste in his selections, adopt a style more suitable, were they to descant on the same subjects, to the same persons, and in similar circumstances. But whatever might be said of his taste or of his fancy, his judgment was generally found correct. It has been stated with truth, in reference to the sacred writers, that the same heavenly spirit which inspired Isaiah and Daniel in the palace, inspired David and Amos in their shepherd's tents: always choosing suitable

interpreters of his will; and sometimes perfecting praise out of the mouths of babes: at one time using the eloquence of some; at another, making others eloquent, to subserve His great purposes. And thus, it may be added, the divine Being still employs the poor rustic, as well as the man of refined taste and superior attainments, each in his own way, and working with his own tools—tools fitted to the hand, and commensurate with the mental energies by which they are directed. "You must all blend," said Crister to one of his daughters, when he visited the family; "Yes, you must live and love like Christians, —blend like eggs in a pudding; for though distinct from each other, before they are put into the basin, yet when beat up by the hand, they all mix and flow together, and become *one*—a complete round whole, and fit for use." This is somewhat like the metaphorical language of the author of "Cardiphonia, or the Utterance of the Heart," who remarked that he always wished his Calvinism to resemble a piece of sugar in a cup of tea—*felt* everywhere, but *seen* nowhere.

The simile employed by the honest collier to his daughter, was recollected after he was gone; whereas, if he had employed—supposing him capable of it—a classical allusion, or more exalted imagery, it would all have been lost upon her. What he said was left behind, and would be present with her, both in her preparations and at her daily repast. Exhor-

tations to peace and unity were common with him; he hated domestic broils and ecclesiastical divisions, and was never known to mix himself up with them. His occupation furnished him with reasons against this; for "as coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife." Not being the subject of petty jealousies and heart-burnings himself, he fenced others from them by his advice and exhortations. "Jealousy" was to him, as to the wise man,—"cruel as the grave: the coals thereof, coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

Looking at his language, abstracted from his similes, though in the rudest state, and with all the peculiarities of the Northumbrian dialect, which, in many instances, would be as difficult to spell, as it would be for a person in the south to pronounce, yet there was great force in it. The observations of Landor, in his "Examination" of one of the first geniuses of his age, will apply here. "How many of our words," says he, "have more in them than we think of! Give a countryman a plough of silver, and he will plough with it all the season, and never know its substance. 'Tis thus with our daily speech. What riches lie hidden in the vulgar tongue of the poorest and most ignorant? What flowers of paradise lie under our feet, with their beauties and parts undistinguished and undiscerned, from having been daily trodden on!"

When the subject of these pages took his

accustomed "walk about Zion," whose "walls are continually before" the Lord, he was sure to linger the longest on that spot, and to frequent it the most, which showed the brightest gilding, and glowed with the warmest beams of "the Sun of righteousness." He had a keen perception of the good and the lively, and a strong relish for the more animated exercises of public worship. If an official person appeared to have but little of the life of God in his devotions, he was certain to have Crister's prayer of "clap fire to him, Lord," sent to Heaven on his behalf. The honest collier knew, as well as those who were employed with him, that *coal*—whether embedded in the mine, or exposed in open day, could only be known in its real value by the application of *fire*. In this, in his esteem, consisted its real *use* to society. The Christian pulpit to him, resembled the *grate* only in the house of the Lord, and the *preacher*—untouched by heaven, the *coal;*—all dead, and dull, and sombre, without the *fire* of God, like the Promethean heat, to animate his discourses. A man, doling and drawling out eternal truth by parsimonious sparks or shreds, and with all the chilling frigidity of a hard winter's frost—truth, which ought to be steeped in all the sublimities of heaven, uttered with the warmth of a seraph, and driven home—absolutely wedged into the human soul, with all the weight which the unseen realities of an invisible world can give

to it,—a man, thus dealing with truth, may assume the appearance of a *coal*, but not a "*coal of fire;*" and would—to such a person as Crister, be nearly as useful in the "horrible pit," as when only *apparently* "brought to bank." There may be vehemence, it is true,—mere animal fire,—much that may be traced up to the temperament, and peculiar constitution of both body and mind; and persons will be found occasionally to explode revivals, and to employ these terms, not only for the purpose of undervaluing the zealous exertions of their fellow Christians, whose labours operate like a standing rebuke to their own, but as an indirect apology for their indifference: but still, though there may be *false fire*,—all is not *counterfeit;* there yet exists the blessed *reality;* a *copy* always implies an *original*. Though "Nadab and Abihu" offer "strange fire before the Lord," yet their father Aaron has the real thing; of whom it is said, "he shall take a censor full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord—and he shall put the incense upon the fire—that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony." And mistaken as the one may be for the other, in some particular cases, there can be no mistake with regard to the *cold* and the *dead*. No dispute can arise here; the case is decided, there are no *signs* —no *effects*—you *feel* nothing; and though you *hear* the voice, it is from the *tomb*. And

are the *lifeless* to set themselves up as judges of the *life* of others? Will the public allow a blind man to decide upon colours, or a person deaf from his birth to pass judgment upon sounds? Such persons may deceive themselves, but they cannot deceive others. Crister would have smiled at a corpulent man, though he knew nothing of either his eating or drinking to excess, delivering a lecture on abstinence. He would have been grieved with a man, had he heard him talking about being zealously affected in a good cause, while he himself remained a piece of personified frost work, with his hands in his pockets, and without "a turned hair," or a movement extraordinary. Uncultivated as he was, he knew from the Bible, that, on one of the seraphim touching the lips of the evangelical prophet with a live coal from off the altar, he both rolled with the thunder and flashed with the lightning. The seer not only became a flame of fire himself, but was the honoured instrument of animating others, who, on the sunny side of Zion, were enabled, in more modern language, to exclaim—"It is good to be here." The psalmist could say, "My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." And the disciples could interrogate each other; "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" But the royal bard

would be much more animated with the fire, than without it; and a minister will never utter "words that burn"—will never set the heart of another on fire, with all his attempts to open the Scriptures, unless the fire be first kindled in himself. Without this, a person may as well attempt to light a fire with a piece of unsmitten, cold, polished steel: and where fire exists, and is kept up, it will soon render itself visible by its effects. Without the fire of heaven, a preacher is like an icicle suspended from the eave of a house in a hard frost—clear, but long and cold. It is an article in the poetic creed of Horace, that he who would draw tears from others, must first show his own; and certainly, he that would inflame others, must be in earnest himself. It would have been as serious a matter for Crister, in a religious sense, as for the "star-gazers" in the days of Isaiah, if there had not been "a coal to warm at, or a fire to sit before." Christian ministers, in the view of such a man, would be beheld like "the man clothed with linen," in the vision of Ezekiel, and would be accosted with, "Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city."

If there was one religious ordinance more than another, of prudential establishment, in which he felt himself at home, it was that of *class-meeting*; and there it was—united, of

course, to a fine devotional spirit, that he displayed most of native character. That such means should have been esteemed and enjoyed by him, is only what ought to be expected from the circumstance of both his conviction and conversion having commenced and been completed there. He generally opened his addresses with—"I was just thinking, friends,"—and then would have followed whatever might have occupied the mind.

Sitting in his accustomed place, the mercies of the previous week would first awaken his attention. "Praised be the Lord," he has been heard to say, "I have got through another week, unhurt in body, soul, and mind; I never had a bone broken in my life."

When reflecting on the state of those who had met with him in church-fellowship, but had been removed from earth by a sudden stroke, or by lingering illness,—"Aye," he would observe, like a prophet in vision, "I think I see them stretching out their necks, and looking over the battlements of heaven, to see whether or not we are coming—whether we have not lost our way. Bless the Lord, we are on the road." In the course of the same meeting, and in allusion to the same subject, but without any prefatory remarks, he would abruptly observe, "We should always be ready when the knock comes to the door." On one occasion, after a breathless pause, subsequent to the last ex-

pression, he applied his knuckles to the boards, startling those who sat next him, rapidly and energetically inquiring, "Are you ready?" replying, "Yes;" next adding, "Come away then." To persons who knew him not, as well as those who were acquainted with his capabilities, there would appear something like trick in the action; but the mind was so completely absorbed with devotional subjects, that he was less like a conscious being at such periods than at others; and seemed as likely, in such a state, to be roused from his reveries by the sound of his own hand, as to awaken the attention of those around him. Any thing like manœuvre in the concerns of the soul is to be reprehended; because it not only argues a want of sincerity on the part of the agent, but is beneath the dignity of a God of infinite perfection to sanction. There is, however, such a feeling conveyed to the heart, as well as such an indescribable something in the manner, subsisting always between that which is genuine and that which is fictitious, that experience alone steps forward in all such cases and records its decision. We are not to judge altogether, however, of the characteristic peculiarities of an action; for some of the more eccentric in the sacred writings, have not only been sanctioned by the divine Being after their performance, but have originated in his appointment. Such a man as Crister would have fulfilled to the letter

every prophetic action and evolution; he would have "smitten the ground" with Joash, and would have aided the monarch, like Elisha, in directing the flight of "the arrow;"—with Jeremiah, he would have placed the "linen girdle on his loins"—hid it in "the hole of a rock by the Euphrates"—improved upon the mechanism of the "potter" and his "clay"—"broken the bottle before the ancients of the people"—put "bonds and yokes" upon his "neck"—and would have "broken the yoke" like Hananiah, after it had been taken from off the prophet;—or with Agabus, would have stripped Paul of his "girdle" and "bound himself with it"—"hands and feet," as a sign of what the apostle had to expect at Jerusalem. Eccentric and sudden as were many of Crister's movements, they were all natural; they never offended; they fitted him with the exactness of his clothes; and like his coat, if seen on the person of another, would have been recognised by the public. They were rarely premeditated, and were generally the offspring of genuine feeling; and though repeated occasionally, with intervals between, the repetition was only when the same feeling was in full operation.

The language of humble and familiar life was often used with peculiar effect by him, while thus encircled by his fellow Christians, and may be considered as confirmatory of the remark of Landor just employed. He remarked, on the subject of temptation, "I

always get quit of the devil by taking him before his *betters*." Then, turning to his class-mates, he added, "Keep none of the devil's secrets, otherwise he will be sure to keep you. When the arch enemy slips unnoticed behind your back, and you find him whispering over your shoulder, take his suggestions directly to the Lord. Do this, and you will soon find, on looking around, that he is off to somebody else. He will not stop there to be exposed. This is the way I do; and many a *tue* (conflict) I have with him down the pit. But when he comes, I get me down behind the *brattish*—begin to pray—and away he goes." If in this case the enemy were not slain, as Benaiah "slew two lion-like men, and also a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow," he was at least foiled in the fight: and often was the pit converted into a place of worship by him, a hundred and forty fathoms beneath the termination of the old Roman wall, where Severus had displayed his idolatrous rites, and near which Roman altars had been erected.

At a time when the work of God was rather low at Carville, and in the neighbourhood, he not only lived in hope of seeing greater prosperity himself, but was the instrument of encouraging the faith and prospects of others. "The work is the Lord's," said he; "he waits to be gracious. We have been blessed in times past; and he has revived his work in other places. What cannot the Lord

do? Think of the revival there was the other day, when no less than three thousand persons were brought in at one time! Let us pray on—believe on—and we shall be catching the skirt of a shower." One of the members, delighted to hear the tidings of a revival, asked him, on leaving the class, "What is the name of the place at which the work has broken out, of which you were speaking?" "Why, do you not know?" returned he; surprised that the *number* did not lead to the association of *place*. With equal simplicity, the person replied, "This is the first time I have heard of it." Crister quickly inquired, "Did you never hear of the *day* of *pentecost?*" The person being somewhat disappointed, and desirous of apologizing for the dulness manifested, returned, "You said '*the other day.*'" Crister, who had been dwelling on the subject, and had associated a modern revival with it, attended with its prayer meetings, and its penitents crying out for mercy, and who seemed to be in the midst of it, in his imaginings, replied—"It is no more; time is nothing when compared with eternity; it is but just like *the other day.*" And as a rebuke for the apparent want of interest in things comparatively remote, as well as for apparently cherished unbelief, he subjoined, "We should always bring those things *near;* they should be *present* with us to encourage us. What God did on the day of pentecost, he can do now. There may be a revival at

Carville as well as at Jerusalem. God is the same—the work is the same—and there is the same need and encouragement now as then."

When his leader found it necessary to speak closely to the members on particular subjects, Crister would have sat like a person watching another in progress with a work of importance; and as the lights in which he viewed different subjects varied often from those indulged by others, he would have struck in with an occasional sentence, like a response, saying, "That is all right;" instantly subjoining, with his eye directed toward the person addressed, "but mind you, Tom," or "mind you, Bill, there is another thing, which he has forgotten." Then, like a last stroke, to rivet all that had preceded, he would dash into the conscience or the understanding some fine, bold, close, searching remark, or would employ some appropriately striking illustration, which had been awakened in the mind by the observations of the leader, and which might have slumbered there but for such observations. Indecorous and annoying as this would be, if generally adopted, it was not only tolerated here, but next to courted for the value of what was educed.

In his more felicitous moments, he would slip in a hasty remark, as a person proceeded with his experience, and before it was deemed proper for the leader to offer advice. "I

have been living next door to glory for some time past," said a person, interrogated on his state of mind. Crister started on his feet on the fall of the sentence, as though bounding at the instance of an invisible power, exclaiming with the ardour of a seraph, "Never leave it, then, till you *shift*;" telling him, in effect, to remain there till death: for if he were so *near*, as to be living *next door* to it, he was not only as close to it as he could well be in this world, but the remove would be exceedingly short, when summoned hence. On his own state he would say, "I wish to go full sail to glory."

Under a fine glow of feeling, the people were sometimes relieved also by a brief sentence sent across the room by him, from the corner where he sat: "How do you feel there, friends? O, there is a heavenly breeze here! It is just wafting past, and refreshing the soul." To persons, strangers to experimental religion, such language—had they been introduced into the room on the occasion—would have been deemed enthusiastic. But Crister was in accordance with Scripture in his phraseology: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Even a "teacher in Israel," like Nicodemus, asking, "How can these things be?" could not alter the subject;

nor would he, on such an inquiry, command our respect.

In prayer, as in speaking, it was the same. A person who was praying that the Lord would "bless the ministry of the word, and make it like a nail fastened in a sure place," was instantly responded to—"Aye, Lord, and *click* (clench) it on the other side;" Crister's additional ardour making it doubly sure, by preventing it from starting.

CHAPTER III.

Visits the chamber of the sick—Faith—His peculiar mode of pleading the promises—Brings a mariner to class—Individuality in prayer—His manner of beginning the Sabbath—Love of the Scriptures—Partiality to prayer-meetings—Power in acting and painting—Startling effects of his conduct to juvenile transgressors in the pit—A sudden hell—Delights to set the minds of others imperceptibly afloat on different subjects—Listens to the voice of prayer—Is a nursing father to young converts—His anxiety for the salvation of sinners—A revival.

Being distinguished for his piety and power in prayer, he was occasionally sent for to visit other abodes than the cottages of the poor. A gentleman, exquisitely sensitive, with an intellect of the first order, and of considerable literary attainments—who, in fact, seemed to be all over spirit, sent for Crister to pray with him in the midst of his despondencies. On his being introduced into the room where the invalid lay stretched upon his couch, persuad-

ing himself that he had become a "cast-away," he took his seat, apparently surprised with the splendour and richness of the furniture and the drapery, occasionally shooting one of his quiet, yet quick glances, at the pictures and more ornamental parts of the gilding and workmanship. A degree of restlessness pervaded his visual organs, till the excellent man who required his aid riveted his attention by his sighs and forebodings, stating that he had no faith, wanted the witness of the Spirit, was solicitous only of the favour of God, but had no hope of ever being saved. Crister sat greedily devouring every word, with his eyes of fire fixed upon him; and yet in their fiery brilliancy there was a sweet glow of tenderness, while his remarks, in the broad Northumberland dialect, were equally kind, though blunt, quick, and pertinent as replies. Having heard the case, he knelt down, and in a kind of half prayer and half exhortation, made his appeals both to the patient and to the throne of grace, telling the Lord, "that he believed, that all that was the matter with the subject of prayer was, he would not give him credit for speaking the truth." Taking hold of this, he immediately bore away in a strain of impassioned feeling, thanking God for a divine revelation, expressing his own confidence in its truth, rejoicing in the consolations he derived from it,—his thoughts almost constantly revolving round the promises of the gospel, and the *veracity*

of the giver. After praying some time with fluency and fervency, he abruptly concluded, and while yet upon his knees, and strong in faith, he inquired—expecting nothing short of brightening prospects—"How do you feel?" repeating with the same breath, "Lay hold of God; rely on his truth—for he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner." Alas! shut up in unbelief, he was only responded to by the sighs of the prisoner, who could believe for any one except himself. Still kneeling by the bedside, and finding the gloom unpenetrated by a single ray of hope, he again broke away in prayer, and turning upon the *love*, as he had dwelt upon the *truth* of God, his whole soul seemed warmed, melted, filled, and overpowered with its influence; occasioning a "joy unspeakable, and full of glory;" which joy, by the way, was not an *impromptu*, experienced only on stirring or public occasions, but an habitual feeling. On a second abrupt termination of his devout aspirations to God, and still in a kneeling position,—conveying the impression of a strong strait-forward current, either taking another direction or suddenly arrested in its progress by an embankment, with its spray dashing over the top—he dropped his upward-turned countenance, and bent it toward the object of his compassion, beaming with tender and joyous expression, accompanied with an inquisitive earnestness, again inquiring—"How do you feel now?—Is faith in exercise?"

Despair, also, was still in its strong-hold; the heart was bolted and barred against all approach with the "precious promises;" and every avenue leading to its door was vigilantly guarded by the sophisms of learning and unbelief, with a mind naturally predisposed to turn to the dark side of the "pillar," which was to him as to the Egyptians "a cloud and darkness;" God, as he supposed, with regard to himself, having "made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies." The impression of *reprobation* was deep, and alone indulged. Without having once risen to relieve himself, Crister—as if touched with another live coal from off the altar, bore away once more in prayer. He caught the term "*reprobate*," and told the Lord in his simplicity, that if acceptance were grounded on character, he was sure he had been a greater "*rip*" than the person for whom he was interceding, and that if he had been disposed to "*pass by*" any one, it would have been himself; dwelling largely at the same time on a *want of merit* in the *creature*—the *atoning sacrifice* of *Christ*—and the fact of God being no "*respecter of persons*." High as he was before, he was still more fervent and more elevated in this last appeal. Dropping as suddenly again as at first, and having felt as though it were impossible for any one to remain unmoved in the midst of so much of the power and pre-

sence of God, he proceeded with his usual interrogatories, to which he received the usual replies. Starting from his knees, big with disappointment, and as if impatient with the perseverance and obstinacy of unbelief, he said, "I tell you what, Mr. ——, it appears to me as though nothing would satisfy you short of God almighty coming down to bed to you, to speak to you with an audible voice: and that he will never do. You may look for this to the day of your death, and drop into hell at last. You will be sure to be disappointed. And why not? God has given you his word, and he will give you no new revelation. Make use of what you have. He tells you *there* that he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner—that Christ tasted death for every man—and that he that believeth shall be saved. If you will not give him credit for speaking the truth, take the consequence, for 'he that believeth not shall be damned.'" So saying, he closed, like a medical attendant, with "I can do no more for you," and departed. The former part of the address shocked the delicate mind of the desponding suppliant, from the familiarity of the expression employed, and startled him like the distant sound of blasphemy; and yet, to the soundness of the theology he could offer no objection. His unbelief was posed at every point; gladly would he have abandoned it: but he was left as he was found; a case that goes to support the truth

of the position,—that we may believe *if* we will, though not *when* we will. This secures the glory of God, whose *gift* faith is, and who blesses every man with a *day of visitation:* and at the same time affords no encouragement to the persevering sinner, who, having turned a deaf ear to the voice of mercy, may be led to indulge a hope that heaven will be at his beck, when the world recedes from his view, and its pleasures can be no longer retained. As to the person in question, Crister had to cope in him with a constitutional melancholy; an affliction of which he had as slender an experimental knowledge as most men, and was as little acquainted with its remedy.

This same person called upon him afterward, and conversed with him a considerable length of time. *Faith* being the chief topic of conversation, he observed to Crister, "There is but *one faith*, of saving efficacy; but there are different *degrees* of it: there is *faith—little faith*—and *mighty faith.*" "Aye," returned the animated collier, "the last is it; keep at that; I always like to be at the top." Speaking of the conversation, afterward, which also became the subject of prayer, he said,—"Why, that man is sure to get saved; he can talk about nothing else but about Christ and faith. Do you think that God will send such a man as that to the devil? No, no." Then, with a fine burst of feeling, and as though God were as ready

to admit, as faith and charity are ready to perform, works of supererogation, he subjoined, "Bless him, if he cannot believe, I'll believe for him;" thus denoting his confidence in the present and final salvation of the subject.

There was, as will have been perceived, a peculiarity both in the *manner* and in the *matter* of his addresses at a throne of grace, which can only be resolved into natural character, a lively imagination, quick perception, and a want of cultivation. While he was praying in the class once, with great fervour of spirit, and rapidity of expression, he took a copy of Clarke's "Scripture Promises" from his pocket, which he generally carried about with him; and without the least interruption in his devotion, or breaking down in a sentence, he turned, with the rapidity of thought itself, to several encouraging and appropriate passages—read them with the same quickness and in the same voice as that with which he had been pouring out the extemporaneous effusions of his soul—made them the ground work of increasing faith, hope, love, and joy, and of still greater earnestness after full salvation—pointing to them—saying, "Here they are, Lord; they are thine own; we claim them through a crucified Redeemer;"—then, turning to his classmates, to encourage them in their expectations, he added, "Yes, they are here,—one here—and another there—all sparkling from

the mint, like new coined guineas! pick them up—take them off—and pay your way with them;" bursting forth in a torrent of gratitude, and bearing every spirit with his own to "the third heavens," where "things unutterable"—if not *seen*, were *felt* in all their fulness. On other occasions, he would have taken up the *promises*, expressed by him, "the 'I WILL' promises"—strung them together in his prayer—enforced them with peculiar energy on the minds of associate suppliants—and pleaded them with a power of faith at the throne of grace which was rarely denied. He would have run on,—"*I will* forgive their iniquity, and *I will* remember their sin no more—*I will* be merciful to their unrighteousness—*I will*, be thou clean—*I will* walk among you—*I*, the Lord, *will* be their God—*I will* be to them a God," &c., &c.; and, then, in the strength of faith in God, and in the warmth of love to man, he would exclaim, "Here is an *I will* for every *state*, and for every *person;* and what God *wills*, he is *disposed* to do,—and what he is *disposed* to do, he *can* do." In praying with *penitents*, he was peculiarly felicitous for power and expression. There was a kind of irresistible omnipotence in his prayer for persons in that state; and there have been instances of prayer meetings being held for a great length of time, and on the point of closing in disappointment, when he has struck in, and the persons for whom prayer

had been made, have entered into the liberty of the children of God.

A mariner, who had entered the Tyne in the course of his calling, was met by Crister a few weeks before his death, and taken to class by him, affording a little scope both for his fancy and piety. Scarcely any thing escaped his eye—and few were the circumstances that were permitted to pass unimproved. He was delighted to see the honest tar, who was exposed to as many deaths as himself; and being requested to pray, the stranger was not neglected. Anxious for his safety, and his own fancy and best feelings being in lively exercise, he prayed, that his soul might be like a clean ship—that all might be found right when the pilot came on board—that, if freighted at all, he might be richly laden with divine grace—and that, at death, when about to enter the fair haven, the custom-house officers might find no contraband goods in his possession, exposing him to seizure and to the prison of hell. Having run on for some time, employing—to the delight of the man himself, and the surprise of all present—a number of nautical phrases, representing this life as a voyage, with its storms and its calms, its depths and its shallows, its rocks and its quicksands, and "an abundant entrance" at the close, he rose from his knees, and with equal presence of mind, gave out, from recollection,—

"Come, heavenly wind, and blow
A prosperous gale of grace,
And waft my soul away
To heaven,—its destined place;
Then, in full sail, my port I'll find,
And leave the world and sin behind."

The mariner visited the class about three weeks after Crister's death, and was much affected by the occasion.

This was not an extraordinary, but a common case. Names, persons, and things had all their associations, and kept not only the imagination, but the emotions of the soul in constant employment; and every workman in the vineyard for the day, had an interest in his intercessory prayers. If *Mr. Mann* had been appointed to preach, he would pray, that he might come up in the strength, and appear before the people in the genuine character, of "a *man* of God." Should it have been the *junior* preacher,—then, that he might be imbued with the spirit of a youthful *Timothy*, or, that Jesus would come up with the "lad" with his "five barley loaves and two small fishes." Or, if a person appeared on the plan whose christened name was *David*,—in such case, that he might be directed to pick up a stone, in crossing the brook, on his way to the place, and enabled by his sling—simple in itself, but mighty, through God, to bring down the Goliah of sin! And in case of the local brethren being appointed,—that the God of Joshua would stand by the *priests* bearing the "*rams*

horns"—breathe through them by his Spirit—and lay prostrate by their blast the walls of Jericho,—every strong hold of Satan!

On the morning of the Sabbath, a prayer meeting was regularly held in the chapel, which commenced at seven o'clock. It was often but thinly attended; but Crister and his leader always made two of the number. As a chapter of the Bible was generally read, the former usually directed his way to the chapel before the opening of the service, for the purpose of prayer, and in order to select what he deemed a suitable chapter for the day,—something peculiarly striking and impressive; and there he might have been seen through the window, sitting alone, if not with "patriarchal grace," like the poet's "cotter," at least with cheerfulness and earnestness,—with all those pleasurable emotions experienced by persons resolved on furnishing their friends with a rich repast; and of whom it might be said,

"He wales a portion wi' judicious care."

His mind, like the bird of the sun, thus hovering over the sacred ground of the Bible, would have instantly descended, and seizing on a chapter which forcibly arrested attention, he would have handed the Bible or the Testament to his leader on his arrival; and, pointing to it, as proper food, for the old as well as the young, would again have feasted upon it, as manna from heaven. In the course

of reading, he would sometimes give utterance to a thought comprised in two or three brief sentences, which, while it came with the suddenness and power of an electrical shock upon the feelings of both the reader and the hearer, would have fallen like a flash of light upon the passage. On other occasions, he would reserve a reflection or two to the close: and when unmoved in either case, he was certain to make it the subject matter of some part of his prayer,—thus raising the mind to God through the medium of his own word.

The high tone of Christian feeling, which was always perceptible to others, may be accounted for in the manner in which he began the Sabbath. It was not merely a quarter of an hour before service that was devoted to private purposes; but almost regularly, he was found in the temple *two hours* before the prayer-meeting commenced, winter and summer, in the storm and in the calm, whether wet or dry. The house of God was his *closet* for retirement on the morning of the Lord's day; and baptized there with the Holy Ghost, he came forth like a giant refreshed with new wine. In winter he lit the stove, and sat beside it with his Bible, or knelt within the shade of a pew. Though the *fire* continued burning in the Jewish temple, the *lamps* were probably extinguished just before sun rise, and here, like old Eli and Samuel, who seemed to have apartments near the ark, Crister,—

"ere the lamp of God went out of the temple of the Lord,"—was found, not "laid down," but in active devotion, waiting to hear the voice of his Maker.

Being a man of prayer, he was extremely partial to prayer-meetings; and was constant in his attendance at different places. One in particular may be noticed, which he, in connection with some other friends, attended, at Byker Hill, ten or twelve years before his death. Here, when the number of persons accustomed to conduct the meeting was incomplete, and also when he felt desirous of impressing the people with religious truth, he would give a short address, a good deal in the dehortatory and exhortatory mood. On perceiving a goodly company one evening, composed of mixed characters, and persons of different ages, he addressed the *young*, the *old*, and the *middle-aged*, giving a portion to each, agreeably to the lives they had led, and the length of their stay in a probationary state. Just at the moment he had strung the people up to a certain point of highly excited feeling—himself being under an extraordinary influence—he suddenly stepped forward with one foot, inclining his body in the same direction, like a person about to throw himself headlong over a frightful precipice, and exclaimed, "O, bless you, I love you so much, that I could dash away downward, and take a dip into hell for you, if it would only be the means of saving you:" and

then, having set every imagination to work, by his attitude and expressions, together with the affectionate burst of philanthropy—every eye at the instant inadvertently turned to the earth, as though it had suddenly opened its mouth, and he was seen whizzing his downward course, he quickly started back,—as if he had just touched the liquid mass, and felt it too much for *him* to bear for the *moment*, and therefore too much for *them* to endure for *ever*, exclaiming, in an altered tone,—"but, mind ye, I should not like to stop there." The sensation produced was beyond description, and can only be comprehended in its effects by adverting to other cases of impressive and stirring eloquence. Nor is there any thing either in the sentiment or the feeling from which it emanated, that is not implied in that extraordinary saying of Moses,—"And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written;" or the no less remarkable, and philanthropic saying of St. Paul, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

Such an instance, too, may lead us more fully to appreciate the real character of Whitefield's preaching, whose power of painting, in which, it is stated, consisted the chief magic of his eloquence, enabled him to carry men where he chose, with a touch more powerful than magic. He is said to have annihilated

every thing but the scene he would present, and drawing aside the veil of eternity, would now lead his hearers to the opening gate of heaven, and now to the yawning pit of hell. In support of this—though wandering a little from home, we have only to witness its effects on Chesterfield. The skeptic was present when Whitefield presented the votary of sin under the figure of a blind beggar led by a little dog. The dog had broken his string. The blind cripple, with his staff between both hands, groped his way unconscious to a precipice. As he felt along with his staff, it dropped down the descent too deep to send back an echo. He thought it on the ground, and bending forward took one careful step to recover it. But he trod on vacancy, poised for a moment, and as he fell headlong, Chesterfield sprung from his seat exclaiming, "He is gone!" With our collier, the effects—though on a less magnificent scale—were not less extraordinary; accompanied, however, with occasional *acting* as well as *painting*.

Some works of darkness were in progress down the pit one day, among the boys and others, in an apartment where there was no light at the time, and therefore suited to the occasion. Crister heard their blasphemies at a distance, and silently wound his way through the workings to the spot, when he sprang in upon them with a light in his hand, revealing every face, hurriedly exclaiming—as his eyes

glared upon them, "Lads, what are you about?" adding, with the same breath, "Do you not know, that God Almighty can take the *whick* (the life) out of you in a moment, just like this *candle*"—closing his finger and thumb upon the flame, and extinguishing it; leaving them in an instant in the darkness in which he had found them—an emblem of that "outer darkness" to which their deeds were hastening them, and a prey to a pit more terrible than the one in which they sported. The light broke in upon them like an unexpected flash of lightning at midnight—their deeds were made manifest—the rebuke fell like a voice from the invisible world upon the ear—and conscience was left to perform its office upon the scared and detected culprits; —Crister praying for each, that God would "deliver his soul," in the language of Elihu, "from going down to the" nether "pit," that "his life might see the light."

"You rebels," said he, on another occasion, when some of them were blaspheming the name of God before they left their work, "are you not aware that if God Almighty were to blast the pit, you would drop into hell in a moment?" Sudden happiness and sudden misery were subjects often dwelling on his mind, and uttered by his lips: and on the latter, the reply of a Cornish miner to the question of a profane wretch who was sporting with eternity in the midst of danger, is exceedingly pertinent, and accords

with the notion which the miner of the Tyne carried about with him, and laboured to impress upon the human mind. The person in question, while in the act of ascending, being impatient to reach the day, made a remark on the depth of the mine, and suddenly transferred his thoughts from one pit to another—mingling his interrogatories with oaths, and asking, "How far is it to hell?" "I cannot tell," returned the person who was suspended in the noose with him, "but if the rope were to break you would be there directly."

Though his actions were generally spontaneous, there was a disposition evidently indulged to take persons now and then by surprise. In one of his musing moods, he approached a hewer in the pit one day, and was close behind him dropping these words into his ear—"Will this be the *last day* thinkest thee?" before he was aware. Turning his view up, and finding it was Crister, he suspended his work, and asked, "Is there no trade?" Crister, deceiving him on another track from the one intended, said, "Yes, there is a trade; but we may not be permitted to see another day." Then, in an equally enigmatical mood, he inquired, "Dost thou think we shall be able to get over?" "Over where?" asked the hewer. "Over Jordan," rejoined Crister: adding, with some emotion, "I think we shall, if we only have *faith* in the king of the city."

He had been dwelling on the case of the Israelites crossing Jordan, and connecting it with his own exit, he was led in the midst of his revery to rouse the attention of a fellow-hewer to divine things. It was in this way he would sometimes accost others; commencing with a brief sentence, whose sense was at first as beclouded as Samson's "riddle," gradually enlarging his boundary to let in more light, till he brought his hearer home to his meaning.

It was to the relief and salvation of the human soul that he was constantly directing his energies; and as it was the joy of his heart to find piety in others, so he not only sought to augment it himself, but exhorted the persons to communicate and shine for the benefit of those around. Having occasion to visit the banks of the Wear, he passed a house where he thought he heard the voice of prayer. He paused, and found his ear correct. It was as the voice of melody; and he not only stood in reverence to join in the worship, but laid his ear to the door, that he might yield the response to the petitions. He had softly touched the latch, but found all fast. When family worship ceased, the good man of the house unlocked the door, and to his surprise found a stranger on the point of entering. The streams of Christian affection, which flowed from each of their hearts, were much nearer than the Wear and the Tyne, on whose separate banks

they dwelt; and after a passing band meeting, Crister told him never to lock his door again during the worship of God—to leave it in a state of readiness for any one to push it gently back, who might be disposed to encircle the family altar with him—and to be fearless in his Christian profession before men.

He had the tribute of respect paid to him by young converts, which children pay to those who love them; and as a higher compliment can scarcely be conceived, as due to age, so a more lovely picture can scarcely be presented to the eye than that of a number of children grouping round and clinging to an old man. The innocence of childhood will attach itself to the innocence of age; and few are better judges than children of the meek, the gentle, and the amiable. Young converts, and especially the young in years, seemed instinctively to turn to Crister; and in his house they were sure to find an asylum. He sang and prayed with them, and nursed them with the tenderness of a parent; travailing in spirit for them, till Christ was formed in them "the hope of glory." Many examples of this kind occurred; one, however, as the subject was closely connected with him in death, may be adduced.

When Thomas Ellerton—afterward designated "Little Tom," and the "Little Old Man," first became serious, he, like others, fled to this "nursing father." He was only about twelve years of age; but he suffered

much when under conviction of sin. Bigge's Main was one of Crister's favourite places, and was called by him "the hot bed of Methodism." A prayer-meeting was established there, and the poor little fellow in whose welfare he felt so deep an interest wished to attend it. He seemed to have more faith in *Crister* and in the *place*, than in the Saviour of sinners; and asked the former to accompany him. Crister had some engagements which pressed upon him; but anxious for the boy's happiness, he told him to go on, and he would follow. As the boy paced by the side of W. Mason, he asked, with great simplicity, "Do you think God can pardon me to-night?" He received for reply, "Yes;" and was encouraged to put faith into exercise. A wishful look was cast back every now and then to see whether Crister was on the road, in whose faithful prayers he reposed great confidence. Crister, on the other hand, desirous of giving him all the aid he had in his power, as well as to encourage him by his presence, posted off the moment he was released from his engagement. Just as Crister arrived at the door, the little fellow stepped into Christian liberty, and "*glory*" was the first word that saluted the ear from his lips. Speaking of the case afterward, Crister said, "I went up to give him a bit of a lift with all the faith I had, in order to help him through the strait gate. He needed all the help he could get, poor thing. But when I

got there, the work was done—ready made to my hand, and I had nothing to do but to rejoice." This kind-hearted man could have prayed for the boy in his own house, as well as at Bigge's Main. But to accommodate his feelings, he laid himself under considerable inconvenience, and after the hard labour of the day, hurried a distance from home; thus complying with the apostolic injunction—"Let them pray over him;" and with a heart teeming with the prayer of one of old, "Deliver him from going down to the pit,"—adding, as a plea,—"I have found a ransom."

There were few cases, indeed, in the neighbourhood, of persons in a penitential state, for whom he did not agonize in prayer, and to whom he did not minister. A collier, who was convinced of sin under a sermon preached by Mr. W. Dawson, hastened from the pit to a prayer-meeting, without going home to wash himself and change his attire. He knelt, like a piece of animated jet, by the side of Crister and others—the white of the eye, and a tear channel down either cheek, presenting the only points of native hue. "We had a sad *tue* (work) with him," said Crister; "we laboured with him about an hour; but he got the blessing at last;—and there was no need for him to tell us, for we saw it beaming through his black face."

He was not only a "nursing father" to the "babe in Christ," and manifested a general concern for the salvation of sinners, but he

directed his attention to particular persons, and made one appeal after another, till they bowed before his importunities and his prayers. Mr. R. having received a female into his service, who was a stranger to vital religion, obliged her to conform to the Christian usages of the family. She made her boast that she would never become a Methodist. Crister soon found her out, and having been subjected to a few of his appeals, she at length fled from the kitchen to an out-house, on his approach. But before three weeks had elapsed, she yielded to the force of conviction, like the tree to the storm, and entered the class which met in the house, in order to secure that repose of which she had so long lived in a state of destitution.

While thus pursuing sinners by his exhortations and prayers, he once remarked with great tenderness,—"Aye, if they only knew, poor things, the happiness we enjoy, they would be good too;" adding, with great ardour, "Why, I would lend them mine;" and then subjoining with his usual acuteness,—"But then, I should never get it back again:" thus showing his distrust of human nature, and the high value he fixed upon his religious enjoyments—considering it enough only to taste the happiness of heaven, in order to induce a person to maintain his hold of the cup of blessing, and sedulously to seek after an increase of the grace of God.

In the midst of a revival of the work of

God, he was rarely otherwise than in his glory —moving about with the briskness and pleasurable feeling of a person prospering in business. On seeing a number of persons, both old and young, brought under a serious concern for the salvation of their souls at Carville, he wept, he prayed, he rejoiced, and felt something of the struggling spirit of an apostle, when he said, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth, until Christ be formed in you." The whole valley, which had been filled for some time with little else but "dry bones," began at length to heave with life. This vision was apparently present with Crister one night, while engaged in a prayer-meeting; and labouring to give expression to the conceptions of his mind on the subject, he became bankrupt in words: to preserve the feeling, however, he rebounded, and caught hold of the circumstances of the times,—praising God for the glorious work he was carrying on, saying, "It was like calling in the old coins, and sending out new;"—the coinage of the realm undergoing an actual change at the period, and occasioning general gladness, as is usual, among all ranks in society—every one trying to obtain a sight, and to keep possession of a piece of the first issue.

CHAPTER IV.

Love-feast addresses—Enlargement of soul—Caution in reference to love-feasts—Preparation for heaven, under the similitude of waiting for a stage coach—His use of Scripture narrative—Occasional conduct in love-feasts and fellowship meetings—The recognition of saints in heaven—Is a publisher of glad tidings—A characteristic stroke on preaching—His love of Christian ministers—Imposes silence on false reasoning—Wild fire—The superiority of deeds to words—Encouragement to expectants—Life a journey—Sudden illumination—The ready reception of a blessing—Comprehensive views—Perseverance and malignity of Satan—The destruction of sin necessary to religious prosperity—Power over the devil.

Some of his *love-feast* addresses are interspersed throughout the other pages of the work; but a few of them demand greater prominency. It was not long after his conversion to God before he became distinguished on those festal occasions, and among some of his earlier essays, when attending one at North Shields about 1815, at which Mr. R. Wilson, of Newcastle, was present, he observed, "I was up this morning at 4 o'clock, praying to God for a good love-feast to-day; and aye, friends, he filled me so full of love, that I could scarcely contain myself. A thought struck me—Why, when religion prospers among a people, they immediately set to work to raise a chapel; and, on finding the good cause on the increase, the next thing they do is, to erect a gallery for the accommodation of the hearers. O, I thought,

while God was blessing me this morning, what a still greater blessing it would be, if he were not only to enlarge my heart, but build a *gallery* in it, for the accommodation of himself—for still greater degrees of divine love." Religious characters may not unfrequently have been thrown in the way of that phrase—"Lord, withhold thy hand, or enlarge the *vessel!*" but this is perhaps the first instance of a "*gallery*" being presented to their observation. And yet, at first sight, a mere conceit as it may seem, it is in perfect keeping with the language of inspiration, where the apostle asks—"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" stating elsewhere,—"Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." It was not a "*vessel*"—such as might be taken in the hand, that could at all comport with the enlarged conceptions of this child of the mine, whose thoughts, while his hands were engaged with the coal, were as frequently and closely employed in mining among the gold and the diamonds of every thing excellent in nature and religion;—no, he reposed on something more capacious;—he proceeded to the magnificent temple—not only galleried at the end, but from side to side—pew added to pew, and seat rising beyond seat—towering, ample, and full—affording at once a fit

emblem of the capabilities of the human soul, in its endless progress in knowledge, holiness, and happiness, and of the infinite goodness of God, from whose "fulness" the Christian receives "grace for grace," or, in other words, grace after grace—blessing added to blessing—one blessing upon another. On one occasion he was so completely overpowered with the joys of religion, that he exclaimed, "Withhold thy hand, Lord, or the vessel will burst." "You should have prayed for an *enlargement* of the *vessel*," said the late Mr. Bramwell, who was standing by at the time.

It is not surprising that his presence should be courted on such occasions; and accordingly, we find him sent for from Edmondbyers, Hexham, Morpeth, and other places,—a practice, by the way, which is not to be recommended. In ninety cases out of every hundred it might not only be injurious in its effects to the individual himself, but would be sure to destroy the influence of God upon the meeting—leading to certain preparations and exhibitions, which would terminate in self-inflation, embarrassment, or something worse. A love-feast is chiefly for the society in the place; and the speaking there should be the spontaneous overflowings of the soul: hence it is that almost every society has its love-feast; and finer strokes of native eloquence have been heard in those meetings than are frequently found to grace the pulpit.

In Crister's case, if allowed at all, it must be admitted as an exception; and no particular evil resulted from the various invitations received. He looked upon invitations as mere tokens of Christian friendship, and speaking followed as a thing of course, from the circumstance of his being present. He diffused, nevertheless, unusual life, and with it a fine religious feeling through a meeting, the whole of which he referred to God, without whom there is nothing wise, nothing holy, nothing good.

In the course of one of his love-feast journeys his patience was a little put to the test. On his first visit to Edmondbyers he was accompanied by Mr. Jas. Wilson, who had borrowed a horse and gig for the occasion. Crister was a stranger to the whip and the rein; and Mr. W., who took the command of both, had all his skill called into exercise by the temper and tricks of the horse, who was small in size, and reported to have had his first training among some gipsies in the neighbourhood of Hexham. On coming to a steep hill the animal became restive; and while whipping, and coaxing, and patting, and backing, and sidling were alternately tried, a neighbouring curate honoured the poor collier and his companion with his presence, his counsel, and his aid. After much trouble, they again got the vehicle in motion. On coming, however, to a farm house, which fortunately happened to be the resi-

dence of a friend, the animal again became restive, and resolutely stood to his purpose. The good friend made his appearance, and seeing the circumstances in which they were placed, proposed to yoke a large dray-horse as a leader, stating, in pleasantry, that if the gig poney would not draw, the horse was sufficiently powerful to draw both him and the gig, with the guests to boot. Time was short, and the period for being at Edmondbyers was fixed. Poor Crister, in his simplicity, concluded the horse to be under Satanic influence, stating that the devil had done it, to prevent them from getting to the love-feast. Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, attributed it, as was natural in an instructer of youth, to *education*, with the addition of a probable want of provender. The result was, the pony was taken out of the shafts, and introduced to the manger; and with a view to expedite the journey, Mr. B.'s horse was brought out, which, compared with the other, was more fit for a wagon than for a gig. The gig having been shaped for a pony rather than a horse, the shafts were expanded to admit the huge animal within their embrace. All being ready, the travellers again proceeded, the horse and the gig forming a perfect contrast; the one lightly dancing over the stones, and the other moving on with the ponderosity of an elephant. The good people at Edmondbyers were on the look out, and were not a little surprised to find visiters drawn in such

style. Crister was a good deal chafed in spirit with it; but prayer and the love-feast soon restored the mind to its wonted tone.

Though there are many eyes and ears open in a love-feast, the presence of the people seemed to weigh but little with him compared with the presence of God; nor was he aware, apparently, of the power of his own language and thoughts upon others, or that any thing that he said would live beyond the hour, or be felt beyond the occasion. The truth is, he was *one* in every place, and in that place, *one* with GOD. In a love-feast in one of the chapels on the banks of the Tyne, and not long before his demise, he observed, with his accustomed cheerfulness—"Thank the Lord, I am *packed up*, and ready!—just like a person waiting for the coach. It will not do for a man to be *preparing* for his *journey*, when the *coach* is at the *door;* or to be *looking* in *another direction*, while *passing*. In the first instance, the *coachman* is *timed*, and *cannot wait* for him; and in the second, the *coach* may have *passed*—be *gone*—and quite *out* of *sight;* rendering it impossible for him to *overtake* it. And then, what is the consequence? The journey is *delayed*—the next coach may be *full*—and the *only chance* of securing the *object* of the journey is perhaps lost for ever! O, friends, let us be on the *look out*, *ready* at a *moment's notice*—waiting with patience till our change come!" This is as accordant with the general sentiment of

Scripture, on the brief and precarious stay of man in this world, as some of the preceding imagery is agreeable to our notions of progressive improvement in the divine life; nor is the language itself out of character. It will furnish an admirable precursor to the "chariot of fire, and horses of fire," passing, as it were, between heaven and earth, and which conveyed the perfected spirit of the prophet to the land of light and glory;—an incident in the closing moments of the seer, beautifully expressed by the bard of Sheffield:—

"Elijah, with his mantle, smote the flood,
And Jordan's hastening waves divided stood;
The fiery chariot, on the farther shore,
Deathless to heaven the ascending prophet bore:
'My father!' cried Elisha, as he flew;
'Lo! Israel's chariot and his horsemen too:'
Then with the mantle, as it dropp'd behind,
Came down a power, like mighty rushing wind,
And as he wrapp'd the trophy round his breast,
Elijah's spirit Elisha's soul possess'd."

As it was through the effect of *fire*, as will be seen in the sequel, that the subject of the present remarks fell; so it will also be perceived, that, as he, in his own expressive language, was "packed up and ready," he only fell to rise with "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

He was exceedingly adroit in laying hold of Scripture incidents and narratives, on public occasions, and making them subserve the devout purposes of his mind, in reference to

others. Having read the affecting account of "Ananias and Sapphira his wife," he entered a fellowship-meeting warm from the subject, and took it up in the course of his own experimental narration. "This man and woman," said he, "had sold their possessions, and proposed to have all things in common with others. They had attended a few meetings,—got their hearts touched,—and resolved to lay the produce of the sale 'at the apostles' feet.' But not being well grounded in religion, or only having a bit of something which they called religion, they no sooner left the meeting than the world entered into their hearts again. Part of that which they had promised to God, they resolved to keep back; and when Ananias went to the meeting with a view to pay the money, Peter found him short in his accounts, and charged him with being brim-full of the devil and of the world, and with lying to the Holy Ghost. He had lost the bit of religion he had,—if he ever had any. Peter told him plainly that the property was his own—in his own power—to do what he liked with, before it was sold; but that, in changing his purpose, he had 'not lied unto men, but unto God.' He was, therefore, in order to strike terror into the hearts of others, smitten with instant death. His wife, not knowing what had been done, and being a good bit behind her time, came into the meeting, as if nothing were the matter. But Peter was in the secret; and was

aware that she was not only 'privy to it,' but had leagued with him to deceive and to forge lies: and the very feet of those who had buried her husband, she was told, were at the door, to carry her out to the grave. What was the consequence? 'Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.' It is an awful thing, friends," continued he, "to keep any thing back from God; and still worse to tell lies about it. We were all promised to God in our baptism, and we have often promised to give our hearts to him since then, but we have kept back part, if not the whole. Here, blessed be the Lord, we may have all things in common,—for we may all be holy and happy." Then, with one of his quick turns, he exclaimed—"All who are happy and resolved to give their hearts to God—*stand up*." This was sudden and unexpected; and two gay young persons who had been admitted into the meeting were scarcely prepared for the test. Crister perceiving this, and with a view to deepen conviction, and effectually to sever the sincere from the trifler, proceeded—"I ask it, in the name of the Lord, and charge you not—even in *action*, 'to lie to the Holy Ghost.' Recollect the case of Ananias and Sapphira!" One of the females alluded to, somewhat affected, made a trembling essay to rise, while the other, as much afraid of appearing singular, by sitting alone, as she was un-

prepared to make a free surrender of herself to God, continued to hold her by her attire, in order to prevent her. Without attempting to justify those little advantages taken of human feeling, and which often hurry people into resolutions they are unprepared to fulfil, the conflict was strong in the present case; the call, coupled with the name of the Lord, was like a summons from heaven; and the frightful end of the persons struck dead, for withholding that from the church which was of less moment than that of withholding themselves from Him who says—"*Give me thy heart*," operated so powerfully upon them, that a visible profession was the result. They stood confused, and pale with fear, while others exulted in the God of their salvation.

Another example of this kind occurred at a fellowship-meeting at Carville. Crister directed his way to the singing pew, at the moment a hallowed influence was felt by the people and cautioned any against leaving the chapel who were solicitous of the divine favour, without securing it. All who were penitent were requested to stand up; some hesitated: but fifteen persons pressed toward the singing pew, and several entered into Christian liberty.

With an air of Christian cheerfulness, when once in a love-feast at Fawdon, he looked around upon the people, and being in a situation where he could see nearly the whole, he said, "Let me look at your faces; I should

like us to know each other, when we reach heaven; and it appears to me, if we feel and pray as we do now, we really *shall* get there. We must walk in the way, if we wish to gain the end." The possibility, nay, the probability, of saints upon earth knowing each other in heaven, was often the subject of delightful anticipation with Crister: and certainly the advocates of cognition rather than recognition have less evidence to support their sentiments than the latter. There was cognition in the case of Peter on the mount, when he realized the persons of "Moses and Elias;" but having seen and known them there, it would not be difficult to recognise them in heaven. But there are numerous inferential intimations to be collected on the subject in the sacred pages. Who was it that told Adam that Eve was to be his wife, when she was introduced to his presence? Who was it that informed the rich man, in the profound depths of hell, that yonder personage—changed in appearance and glorified, in the heights of heaven—was Lazarus, who recently lay at his gate? To say that this is *parable*, alters not the question; for while *history* shows what *has* been, *parable* shows what *may* be; and hence the *probability* of recognition. Look there upon Saul, with a foul old beldam for his companion, and his person completely *disguised!* Who is it—thus accompanied and thus disfigured—that informs Samuel it is the

Jewish monarch who appears in his presence? Should such knowledge be referred to God in one case, we have only to refer it to him in another, with a view to obviate the same difficulties. But who is to inform St. Paul at the last day that such and such persons in the immense crowds placed before him have been brought to a knowledge of the truth through his ministry? They are to be his crown of rejoicing in heaven. But *knowledge* must form the basis of his *joy*; he must know them, previously to his rejoicing in them.

Crister was not a man that busied himself in other people's concerns. His conversation was emphatically religious. When he heard of the extension of the work of God in any particular place, he assumed the character of a messenger of glad tidings; and like a courier, would have communicated it from post to post; sometimes, when passing the house of a friend in haste, either naming it in the door-way, or, in louder accents, sending it through the window, with his face against the glass. It was only with his most intimate friends, however, that he would presume on the latter, and when hastening home from the pit in his working habiliments, unwilling that they should remain longer without knowing what would yield as much delight to them as to himself.

When, in his remarks, he was led to make an observation or two upon character or of-

fice, he was generally pointed—often instructive—and almost invariably on the side of candour. Speaking of a preacher, he said, "His preaching is just like a *snowy day;* it does not only fall *soft*, but *searches*, and finds its way through every *crevice;* it hits all—it misses nothing." Of another, he said, "He has a large body. May the Lord grant him an enlarged soul! and may the whole soul be thrown into God's work; and in that work may both be worn out!"

On a preacher being appointed to the circuit, he manifested the anxiety of a person expecting a relative or absent friend, to obtain the first glance of him, and as his patience rarely held out till he appeared before the congregation, he would make repeated calls at the house of Mr. Reay, inquiring—"Has he come yet?" On his arrival, he was certain of a welcome from Crister. After the usual salutation, he asked a young preacher, with his wonted ardour, and a degree of abruptness, "What do you preach for?" Perceiving him a little at a loss for an answer, in consequence of not fully comprehending his meaning—"Do you preach for souls?" he subjoined. The manner, as well as the time, of proposing such a question, would have carried with it an air of impertinence, from the lips of many other men; but from Crister, to those who knew him, it was a question of solicitude for the prosperity of the church; and as he entertained the highest opinion of

the preachers, he expected an answer only in the affirmative.

With a view to suppress all false reasoning, and to inspire genuine confidence in God, he adverted to the case of the disciples when on the coasts opposite to Dalmanutha, without the persons to whom he was speaking being aware of his design. He graphically represented "the twelve" in social discourse with each other, and expressing, in the temporary absence of their master, their doubts and fears respecting him, together with his works, with great freedom. Just at the moment they were beginning to warm, as "they reasoned among themselves," Jesus unexpectedly appeared in the midst of them, abruptly, and pointedly asking, while fixing his rebuking eye upon each, "O ye of little faith! why reason ye among yourselves?"—"What a *mazer*," said Crister, flashing his own reproving eye upon those for whom he intended it,—"What a *mazer** that would be for the disciples! Why, they would scarcely know where to put their heads! They would be quite ashamed of themselves." Connected with this was a practical improvement;—that our Lord is unchangeable in his goodness and power—what he once did he can still do—men should reason less, and believe more—the divine eye is upon us in every place, and the divine ear is open to our remarks.

"Wild fire!" he exclaimed one day: "I

* How it would surprise and confound.

have had the fire of heaven burning on the altar of my heart for the last twenty years. People may call it what they like; it keeps me warm and comfortable, and I am resolved to keep up the flame." He knew, that as the fire in the Jewish temple was never permitted to become extinct, but was fed by night and by day; so in the human temple, the fire of divine love, of which the other was an emblem, was never designed to be otherwise than bright and animating. "People," said he, on the same subject, "talk about not being able to get through their work. There is nothing like the love of God for this. I can get through twice as much with it than without it. It bears the mind with cheerfulness above it, and inspires the body with fresh energy to do it." He knew as well the difference between heavenly and "strange fire," as he did between natural heat and an artificial flame; and while others "baked bread upon the coals" of the idols they had made, as in the days of Isaiah, he only would receive the bread which cometh down from heaven, as he was resolved to live under the animating influence of its genuine fires. As the "living creatures," therefore, of Ezekiel, the "appearance" of Christians in his estimation was to be that of "burning coals of fire."

Showing the best way of settling a disputed point, where the case would admit of it, by a reference to *deeds* rather than *words*, he ad-

verted to the case of John Baptist, who sent his disciples to Jesus, inquiring, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" "Here," said the domestic expositor, "instead of answering them in so many words, our Lord immediately set to work to perform a few more miracles, and in these he said, 'Go, and show John again those things which YE do *hear* and *see:* the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.'" Then, comprehended in a single remark or two, followed a pointed improvement or application: and although he might not in every instance be in critical accordance with the context, yet it is remarkable to find, how—unaided by note or comment—correct his views in general were, and with what aptitude and readiness he could elucidate and apply the sacred text on particular occasions.

Speaking of the means of grace, and his own expectations in them, he surprised his friends into his views and feelings, by taking them in imagination to Jerusalem, and there placing them before "the gate of the temple, which is called beautiful." "See," said he, "'a man, lame from his mother's womb.' Thither he had been carried, and there he is 'laid daily.' Ask him, poor thing,—'Do

you expect to get any thing to-day? while sitting there, begging *alms*.' His answer is, 'To be sure I do, otherwise I should never have left home.' Now, like the beggar at the beautiful gate, I never go out without *expecting* to receive something; and when I go 'into the temple at the hour of prayer, like 'Peter and John,' I never wait there any length of time without *receiving*. I go expecting—I continue asking—and I never come away disappointed."

Life was a *journey;* and while he secured a proper supply of provision to support him on the road, he would say, with great earnestness and resolution, "I am determined, by the help of God, to be at the *end*." Life was a *race;* and with equal ardour, he would exclaim, "No man shall have my *crown;* I am resolved to wear my own; it will fit me best." He saw the goal at the end of the race, and the crown suspended over it. He took the goal on his way to the crown. He aimed at the "mark" of holiness, that he might secure the "prize" of heaven; and in order to effect his purpose, he pursued his object with ardour, exclaiming with the apostle, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

He had been at Brunswick Place Chapel, Newcastle, on the first introduction of the

gas into it; and being at a season of the year when a dim glow was scarcely perceptible to a person who knew the gas to be partially on, at the commencement of the service, and still less so to one not looking for it, he sat in the crowd insensible to every external object, except the preacher. The shades of the evening continuing to deepen, the features of the preacher began at length to disappear: just at the moment a deep venerable gloom overshadowed the whole interior, the person who had the management of the gas turned the tap, and in the twinkling of an eye filled the place with a body of pure, intense, and soft light, from so many distinct flames, the most liquid in their appearance, and the least offensive to human vision. It operated on Crister like the transfiguration upon the apostles, who, in all probability, closed their eyes beneath the "raven wing of night," and in the midst of its darkness and stillness, unexpectedly opened them in the centre of a full blaze of glory—glory increased in its intensity by the gloom which preceded, and the "blackness of darkness" which still lay beyond. Being in a sweet frame of mind, he seemed to have sprung into the regions of light, without once touching "the valley of the shadow of death" between. "O," said he, in his warmth and simplicity afterward, "it was like the sudden illumination of a human mind by the Spirit of God: and aye, when God turns the tap, and

says, 'Let there be light,' darkness disappears in an instant." It comported well with his notions of an instantaneous work, and with a body and mind formed for action. With this too he was not only more deeply impressed, but sooner attracted.

Passing along one of the streets in Newcastle, he made a momentary pause, to look at the unloading of a cart before the door of a cheesemonger. "I watched the men," said he: "one was in the cart, and the other was in the door-way. He that was in the cart threw one cheese after another, as fast as he could; and the man in the door-way was always ready to receive them; he never once missed. You would have been astonished, if you had seen him,—he did it with such *ease*, and *confidence*, and *readiness*. I thought at the time, why, this is just like *faith* and *works* in the *reception* and *use* of gospel blessings. God has *plenty to give;* we should *stand* in the *way*, and be *ready* to *receive;* nay, we should be in a state of *expectation* for the *coming* blessing; and *believing* that it is *intended* for *us*, we should *lay hold* of it with *confidence*, and then hand it to others. Aye, I should like to be a good *kepper;* just ready to catch the blessings as they come, while the Lord, in his bounty, is dealing them out." While employing the provincialisms of *kep*, *kepping*, and a *kepper*, he conveyed the notion at the same time of a person playing with balls, fully confident in

his dexterity and skill, throwing them up, and catching them in their fall,—several of them, and for a given period, without missing one; only in his association of the *men* and the *cheese*, there was more of *duty* than *sport*,—something more *substantially useful* than *balls*,—something in the shape of a Stilton or a double Glo'ster,—or from the less remote dairies of Cheshire.

On his Sabbath visits to Newcastle he generally found his way to Mr. Nesham's class, and occasionally led it. "You must come down to Carville," said he to Mr. N., "and meet our class some time. The leader will be glad to see you; there are five and twenty members; he stands in the midst of us like a father, and we all look up to him like children. We are as happy as the day is long." This is a pretty picture of a class meeting, and is just what a leader and his members ought to be to each other. Being asked, on one of these occasions, on his return home, where he had been, and whom he had seen? "At Newcastle," he replied, "and I saw such a one"—naming the person; "he is full of heaven,—as full as an air balloon;" intimating that he would one day mount upward—light as a thing of air—yet full of majesty and grace. A person once observed of Crister himself, that he had "a soul like a thimble;—it was soon filled, and soon emptied." His conceptions, however, far exceeded, in occasional magnificence, the personal criticisms of his friend.

There was much less extravagance in his representations than those around him were authorized to expect, from the vividness of his imagination and impressions; and he rarely failed to give a distinct picture of the thing itself, not only for the mental eye to repose upon for the moment, but to be hung up in the chambers of the mind—that the by-stander might again and again return to it, and participate in the pleasure at first imparted. In cases where the images were either imperfect, or not sufficiently indelible, they would still appear and vanish in their passage through the mind, like the figures of a phantasmagoria, awakening half-forgotten associations in some, and gratifying the curiosity of others. Many of his sayings and similes have become household things on the banks of the Tyne. To a friend he observed, when speaking of the malignity and perseverance of Satan,—"He will pursue the saint with the same temptation for years—to death itself—yes, to the very verge of heaven. And look at him there;—unable to pass the threshold, he lays one hand on the gate-post, to support himself, and stretches forth the other to make a *click* (catch) at the soul just as it slips in before him,—but *bang* goes the door, and snaps his fingers." While speaking, the action was suited to the subject—shaking his own hand, after drawing in his arm, and applying his fingers to his lips, as if to sooth the pain on being suddenly

trapped. It is not improbable, that there was a distant reflection in this of the conduct of St. Paul in the pursuit of a higher calling, who *followed after*—who *pressed toward*—"*reaching forth* to those things which were before"—and so throwing himself, as it were, at the last step, upon the prize, by a last and vigorous effort of nature; securing, however, what Satan had lost.

The lower part of the New Road Chapel, Newcastle, having been employed as a granery for some years, Crister mourned over what he deemed a desecration of the place, and the depressed state of the work of God that occasioned it. On the dawn of a brighter day, when the entire place was converted to its original use, he exceedingly rejoiced; saying, "There could be no prosperity in the midst of the world; but when the old fusty corn was removed, God began to work. Christians form the church of God; their hearts are like places of worship; but before God will take up his constant abode with them, there must be a *clean sweep;* all the rubbish of sin—all the fusty grain of this world, must be got quit of. We have an example of it in the New Road Chapel. Who but thieves will become buyers and sellers in the temple? There is nothing but the whip for them, if the house is again to become a house of prayer."

Some of the young men having been behaving improperly down the pit, as in cases

already noticed, and displaying more than usual profligacy, a person standing by, remarked, "That really beats the devil." Crister, who was within hearing, anxious to improve the expression, sharply subjoined, "I would not give a half-penny cabbage for the man that cannot beat the devil." He knew that Satan could only be conquered through grace,—that every Christian possessed grace,—and that little hope could be entertained of the safety of those who were under Satanic power. "Who," said he, on another occasion, when endeavouring to dissuade sinners from hastening to ruin,—"Who would go to hell, that can prevent it? What a poverty-stricken place must that be, which cannot afford so much as a drop of water to wet the tongue of a rich man!" Such was the esteem in which he was held, and the value of his remarks, that the fact of his having uttered them was like the stamp of royalty upon a coin; they became sterling, and found immediate circulation,—and that, too, very often independent of the quality of the metal, and the size of the model. The veriest mites were often received with enthusiasm, and added, like those of the poor widow, to the treasury of those who possessed a trifle, and became a real treasure to those who had none.

CHAPTER V.

Progress in piety—His usual place of retirement—Answers to prayer—Prays for the preachers—Conversions—He is not to be taken in all things as a model—His exemption from frivolity—A peculiarity in his conceptions—His conduct under severe providential dispensations—Personal affliction—Attempts to do good in a pecuniary way—His benevolence of character—Grateful acknowledgments—He aids a poor widow—A love-feast—Singing—A dream—Mr. Bramwell—A garden.

Being always on the alert himself in matters of religion, he was a perpetual spur to the indifference of others. "Never," he would say, "be on the same ground to-day you were upon yesterday." He was like a bird on the wing, and he would suffer no one around him, over whom he had the least influence, to slumber longer on the perch than was necessary.

On his children annoying him in moments of communion with God, and yet being engaged in such little amusements as to render reproof and correction unnecessary, he would take up the key of the chapel, which place was nearly next to his own door, and would there lock himself in, and enjoy, undisturbed, the presence of his Maker in his own sanctuary.

His partiality to prayer, and the frequent peculiarity of his manner, are subjects alluded to elsewhere; but as tests of his sincerity in the exercise of the duty, and of the strength

of his faith in his pleadings, we must look to the issue.

When Mr. Reay, his class-leader, met with a severe accident in the pit, by a fall of stone from the roof, and from the effects of which there was not the most distant hope of ultimate recovery entertained by his medical attendants—the marvel being, after the crushing and breaking of bones, that he survived at all, Crister was deeply distressed. Till about the eighth or tenth day all were in despair except Crister, who was about six days in advance of the whole with his faith and hope. Many were his wrestlings with God on the behalf of his leader and his friend; and on the third day after the accident, he came to Mrs. Reay, who was unable to pierce the cloud, with the animated looks and expression of a person who had discovered some hidden treasure, exclaiming, "The master will get better!" Mrs. R. inquired, "Why do you say so?" "I have just been praying," he returned, "and the Lord has shown me that he will go to chapel again with an *up* and a *down*;" meaning that he would recover, and go *halting* to the house of God. And such was the fact; for as "the sun rose upon" Jacob after the angel of the Lord "touched" him, and as he was enabled, through the good hand of God upon him, after "the sinew shrank," to "pass over Penuel," though "he halted on his thigh;" so the same sun shone on Mr. Reay, who

passed from his house to the chapel, and though "with an up and a down," walked before Crister—pursuing the avocations of life, five years after the afflicting event, and was left to walk before others after Crister's own decease. As the revelation of his recovery was first made to this good man, and made in the exercise of prayer, Christianity warrants us to admit the probability of his restoration being in answer to the devout breathings of his soul to heaven, in connection with the prayers of others. When Mrs. R. was seriously indisposed, his prayers were also offered up for her; and one of the sentences, as striking for the alliteration, as it was distinguished for the fervour with which it was uttered—"Lord, give her health or heaven," is worthy of record. She had the former, and is still on the way to the latter.

On a Sabbath morning, Crister had been up early, as wont, and he was soon joined by a few friends, who united with him in prayer for the preacher for the day. Mr. Nichol, of Newcastle, who was planned for Carville, attended to his appointments. He had fixed on his texts, and made suitable preparation for addressing his auditories. The afternoon service passed off as previously intended; but the mind became unsettled with regard to the evening, in consequence of the text and subject selected becoming matters of perplexity. He opened his mind to Mr. and Mrs. R., who wisely and religiously ad-

vised him to yield to the impressions of the mind respecting any other subject that might be proposed, and with which he might be impressed. He took the advice—retired after tea—when a text which had occurred was sought for, and with some difficulty found. He took it up, without seeing his way clearly into it, and without being entirely free from some distracting preferences with regard to the one previously fixed upon. Here he stood, as between two parties—one pulling in one direction, and the other in another, with the argument of *preparation* on the one hand, and that of *impression* on the other—the natural texture of his intellectual character giving its voice in favour of the former. He went to chapel, and remained undecided, till nearly the close of the second hymn, when he threw himself upon the text at a venture, praying for divine light into it. The liberty and enlargement of spirit which he experienced was marked by his hearers; while to himself he seemed to be a mere *machine* in the hand of God, who was employing him for his own purposes, without the power to guide, or having the credit of being master of his own thoughts. The only key to this is, the *conversion* of *five persons* under the evening sermon; and how far, in the mysterious proceedings of God—whom we cannot suppose to have deserted the Christian pulpit—the prayers of Crister and his friends influenced the case, eternity alone

will reveal. It will be admitted, at all events, that if there was more *prayer* for the success of preachers, and less *said* on the subject of their separate qualifications, both the church and the world would profit more by their discourses.

Some time after this, Crister, who clung to the preachers of the gospel like a child to his nurse, set Mr. N., in company with some other friends, on part of his road home through the fields. It was when the days were short; the night was cold and dark; the foot-path was little more than dimly visible; but before this devotional spirited man could leave the person who had been feeding him with the bread of life, he would have a prayer-meeting; and, accordingly, at the point of parting, in the open air, he turned his face to the stars twinkling through the azure vault above, as Daniel turned his face to Jerusalem, and implored the blessing of heaven upon each of the party, but especially on him who had thus been ministering to them—bearing a lively recollection of the good done in the course of his previous visit—and praying that he might be still more abundantly useful in promoting the salvation of souls. This was not a solitary case. He has been known to pause in the middle of a turnpike road, whether in the dark or in the light, to pray aloud on parting with a friend, and to request that friend to pray with him for a mutual blessing. These brief, and apparently

erratic movements, were like so many safety valves for the purpose of letting off his effervescing feeling. By a lady, like Mrs. Trollope, who, in her book on America, has given a ludicrous caricature of the Methodists in the west of the United States, such conduct would scarcely be deemed decorous: but Crister recollected the "*river-side*" prayer-meeting at "Philippi," of which another example still awaits the reader.

He made it a constant point to pray for the preacher whom he was going to hear. "O, Lord," said he, in reference to one, "grant that the moment thy servant places his foot on the pulpit stairs, he may rise a step into thee! With the second, may he rise another step into thee! And thus, may he continue to rise step after step, till he reach the top!" The excellent man, who heard him pray before he went to chapel, could not but advert to the petitions which had thus gone to heaven before he entered; and as he ascended the sacred stand, he could not but feel their influence. The substance of a petition like this, for a Christian minister, is no more than what the psalmist prayed for on the behalf of the multitude, when, with holy ardour, he said—"Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up for ever."

When he was in company with persons who partook in some measure of his own spirit and views, and shared in the liveliness

of his own fancy, it was dangerous for gravity to be near. He was praying in the house of a friend on a Saturday evening, and being desirous that Mr. C., who knelt by his side, should be in the spirit on the Lord's day, he abruptly turned his face toward him, and asked in a hurried manner, as if hemming in a parenthesis to the prayer—"Where will you be to-morrow?" Mr. C., with equal quickness returned, "If you had been *inspired*, you would have *known* that!" Crister, not in the least discomposed, and as if there had been no pause in the petitions, instantly turned his thoughts to the *inspirations* of the Holy Ghost, without which the word is but a "dead letter," and the minister himself a "tinkling cymbal," and prayed most fervently, that both preacher and people—in whatsoever part of the vineyard the lot of the former might be cast—might be inspired from above. Happily, he had but few imitators in these outbreakings. They were tolerated in himself; but in another they would have been as insufferable as they would have appeared unnatural. It is one of those evils which seems to be left as an entail upon imitators, that where there is an imperfection in a person admired or loved, the imperfection is next to certain to be adopted, and to appear most conspicuous as a graft. It almost invariably grows out like an unseemly excrescence on the rind of a tree.

It was not only with others that he would

have indulged in these occasional aberrations, which are noticed by way of introducing the reader to real character, and which can only be viewed as imperfections, but he would sometimes soliloquize for a few sentences in the midst of a prayer, giving question and answer, as in a regular conversation, without the slightest apparent chasm, or any diminution of devotional feeling. Thus, after having been praying a short time, and recollecting that he was surrounded by those with whom he had often conversed on religious topics, and for whose salvation he had often prayed, he said; "O Lord, there are a number of people of whom no one knows what to make. We say to them, 'When are you going to class?' They say, 'Soon!' But *soon* never comes. This man beside me"—a person of whom he had a pretty correct knowledge—"is perhaps saying, 'Crister means me.' Yes—I am going to be very plain; I do mean him." Then, in an instant, and with the utmost fervour, he prayed for individual salvation. Though charity forbids a classification of these things with "spots" in ancient "feasts," she does not—while exhorting the "strong to bear the infirmities of the weak"—allow us either to countenance, encourage, or glory in such freedoms, while kneeling at a throne of grace.

Yet in the midst of some of his little personal sallies—never employed but with the best intention, and for the real good of the

individual concerned—it is difficult to withhold our approval of his *fidelity*. He would never for a moment—whether entertained in the house of rich or poor—allow a compromise of Christian character with mere etiquette, or conceal his opinion of the moral and religious condition of the several members of the family. A person of wealth, under whose roof he was hospitably treated as a guest, being what is denominated "a free liver," experienced the weight of both his exhortations and intercessions. While engaged in family prayer, he dwelt emphatically on the habits indulged by the head of the house; and then, as if to encourage him to break away at once from every sinful bond, he exclaimed, "Bless the Lord, it is possible—there is hope—the angels may have yet to say, and that some day soon, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,'—and let old such a *one* (naming him) come in;—here he is, the angelic hosts will say,—we have long been looking for him;—saved at last!" Such an ecstasy of feeling accompanied the sentiments, that heaven itself seemed opened on the occasion, and nothing appeared wanting but the simple consent of the will—the simple turn of one heart, as upon a pivot, to gladden the spirits of both "the watchers" above, and the "dwellers" below.

Notwithstanding the almost invariable cheerfulness which he manifested, it never

degenerated into frivolity. It was the playfulness of the lamb, whenever it was permitted to enter within the bare precints of hilarity—innocent in itself, and without the slightest evil tendency to others; and was so tempered with the good and the charitable, that it was impossible not to perceive that it originated in the sunshine of the heart—in progressive piety—in a consciousness that he was on the move toward a better place, with an improved state of feeling. And as his native buoyancy was never permitted to betray him into improprieties incident to such characters, so neither did the adverse movements of Providence ever occasion unusual depression. While he felt like a parent, and sympathized as a man and a friend, he could still adopt the apostolic language, as expressive of his experience, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." His sincerity, and the peculiarly Christian views he entertained on providence and grace, would admit of nothing else. He seemed to have a vision of his own very often: and like a person sitting in the same room with his friends, and under the same circumstances, would either be enjoying a landscape in the act of looking out upon it at one window, while they were gazing upon the surrounding district, in a contrary direction, from another; or, if not seated alone, with his own view, but looking from the same casement with those around him, would be certain to fix his eye on the brightest and

most cheerful spots, while they were reposing on others, with their more neutral tints, in the shade. Some of the larger objects and broader outlines would be embraced by his companions, while many of the intermediate fillings, both in the extreme distance and at hand, upon which nature had bestowed the greatest harmony of proportion and delicacy of colouring, were delighting his own vision. The one would frequently pass over what would arrest the attention of the other. He would pick up a flower, and either point out beauties which had remained invisible to his associates, or would admire it in silence, with a countenance expressive of the pleasure he experienced in surveying that which he might even fail to explain. But though he occasionally broke down for want of words to describe a thing as it actually appeared in nature, or was represented to his mental eye, he generally succeeded to admiration, when he sought to illustrate one subject by another, and rarely failed to deepen the interest.

The writer has been partly led into these reflections, by the occurrence of two or three painful providences in the history of Crister, in which God, in the language of the "wise woman," was pleased to "quench his coal." He had two boys killed; one in the pit and another above ground. The latter was run over by one of the coal wagons, and was from six to seven years of age. He was a beautiful boy, and full of interest. The first

time his father attended his class after the accident, he observed to the leader and to his class-mates, in a somewhat chastened tone, "It seems as though the Lord had come down to look about me, like the gardener going into his orchard to examine the fruit trees. He goes from one to another; and having carefully gone his round, he puts forth his hand, and plucks from one that bears the best and ripest fruit. The boy whom the Lord has been pleased to take from me, was the best of all my dear children, and therefore the fittest for his own garner. Not my will but thine be done!" As he felt perfectly resigned to the will of God after the accident, so there was a certain preparedness of feeling to meet it. The very week before it occurred, he said in a public meeting that his sole wish was "to be a mere *cipher* in the hand of God —perfectly passive—to be any thing or nothing." The friends who heard him, on being informed of his bereavement, could not but advert with devout feelings to the sentiments of the previous week; and certainly they harmonized admirably with what followed. While Seneca poures forth his laudatory strains in favour of the masculine and heroic bravery of the Stoics, who put off the man, and trod above the stage of human fortune and accidents, religion has a much nobler subject for eulogy in such a person as Crister, who, while he feels as a man, is resigned as a Christian,—uniting in himself, as it were, a

double character. He stooped, and struck sail to the providence of God; for he well knew, that whatever disasters befall a good man in his family, unoccasioned by himself, they are the work of a permissive providence, and that in all the dispensations in which the wisdom of God has the greatest share, and the wisdom of man the least, there is greater cause for adoration than censure—for resignation than complaint. "Thunderbolts," it is stated by one of the ancients, "are never more just, than when they are adored by him who is thunderstruck."

Personal afflictions were borne with equal patience with those of a domestic character. "I have been poorly," said he to a friend one day, who was inquiring after his health; "and though I have not been entirely laid aside from work, I have found it rather hard to do the little I have done. I sometimes compare myself to an out-patient of the infirmary. I am not quite bad enough to be taken in; and God keeps handing me out a little strength now and then, like medicine. In his hand I keep improving, though slowly. But all is well within." His breast, which was to a certain extent proof against his own sufferings, was nevertheless tender toward those who were the subjects of fatherly chastisement; and so much so, that, in visiting the sick, he seemed to go to relieve himself rather than the sufferer—relieve himself of those yearnings and meltings of heart which

he experienced with regard to their present and eternal welfare. This is the man, who is sick with another's sickness, and yet triumphs over his own! For a man to grieve for his own sufferings is weakness; not to grieve for those of others, argues a perversity of feeling which ought to be dreaded: such a man has cause to complain, not of providence, but of himself,—not on account of what he suffers, but because of what he has merited.

While Crister employed every mean in his power to support himself and his family, he was perfectly dead to the world, so far as a wish for temporal prosperity went, as well as perfectly satisfied with every dispensation of God with regard to his health. He was in fact one of those men, who, agreeably to an opinion of Malvezzi's, would rather have preferred adversity than prosperity, though the latter might have been calculated upon—not in the way of desert, but from his piety and industry. He knew enough, in voyaging across the ocean of life, to convince him, that greater numbers are wrecked in the pacific, or, in other words, in the haven of tranquillity, than amidst the bill owsof conflicting disasters. Adversity is calculated to humble, and therefore it is, that the good man, with a fair proportion of this ballast, holds his way —king-like—under its pressure; whereas, prosperity tends to swell and inflate the mind, and so perverts the whole. Besides—to accommodate ourselves to the language of the

world, if every man has his *fortune*, and every fortune its *wheel*, where, it may be demanded, is the propriety of complaining? The wheel of no man can descend so much one way, as not necessarily to ascend another. Those persons alone complain of what they call fortune, who have their souls so firmly attached to their bodies, that when one precipitates, the other descends with it. The Christian, whose soul possesses one part of the wheel, and his body another, is always at adverse points. So it was with Crister; as the body descended grave-ward, the soul mounted to heaven. He bore his head, aye and his heart too, —for his treasure and his conversation were in heaven—above the clouds; tempests could not reach him; he was neither shaken by the winds, nor smitten by the lightning.

Limited as were his means of doing good, he employed them as far as they would carry him; and was even inventive, in the benevolence of his heart, in promoting their enlargement. The chapel at Carville was repaired and beautified in the spring of the year before his death; and a collection being to be made, to defray the expenses, he was among the more active to meet the demands, both by personal applications for pecuniary aid, and by inviting people to attend the services on the day of opening. To a friend, whom he met in the streets of Newcastle, he said, "You must come to our opening to-morrow." Some impediments being in the way, they of

course were offered as an excuse for not acceding to the request. "Well, then," returned Crister, "you must give me something to put into the box for you." This being readily granted, and to show the person that he would lose nothing by his absence from the services of the occasion, Crister quietly and simply observed, as he put the money into his pocket, "You will get a blessing for this, for we always pray for those who give us any thing."

In addition to private applications, and what he had purposed in his heart to give of his own, he was led to contribute in another way from that which he at first meditated. Thomas Ellerton, a boy already noticed, and to whom he had been extremely useful, came to him, and expressed a wish that he had something to contribute on the occasion, bemoaning his poverty. Crister sympathized with his little class-mate, who himself was a child among children. The boy, as has also been observed, went by the name of "*the little old man*," among the seniors in society, because of his stability, good sense, and sedative habits. As Crister intended to go to the extent of what his purse would allow for himself, he was a little puzzled how to relieve the feelings of his juvenile favourite. However he sent him away, saying, "I think I shall be able to contrive something for you." It was not long before he told him that he had hit on a plan of relief. "We have a good few leeks,"

said he, "in our garden; and as there are more than we shall be likely to want, you shall have what we can spare. If you think you can find a market for them, you shall sell them; you shall have one half of the money, and I will take the other, and the whole shall be put into the collection." The boy instantly sprung at the offer; a wheel-barrow was borrowed—the leeks were pulled, and laid in it—the young salesman went through the village, the neighbouring hamlets, and some of the more distant places—and continued his toil till he sold the whole. He returned home, "though faint," in triumph, bearing his prize like a Grecian from the Olympic games, and made an offering to the Lord of the whole of his share of the sales, to the delight of the writer, who made the appeal to the liberality of the public on the occasion. Others might have given of their abundance—Crister gave what he could spare of his penury—and this little fellow gave the whole of that which had become his *all*. These "leeks" imparted greater joy of heart both to the giver and the seller than the whole growth of Egypt could have yielded to the languishing Israelites; and the action will retain its verdure in the recollection of those who witnessed it, much longer than the wreath, composed of the olive, the pine, the apple, and the parsley, according to the well-known Greek epigram, which adorned the brow of the Olympic victor.

Crister, who never forgot a kindness, was in the frequent habit of taking a part of the produce of his garden to persons to whom he felt himself laid under obligation, and of presenting them with the same.

A poor widow who had lived in the neighbourhood was involved in great pecuniary distress. Crister heard of it; and though poor himself, it was a treasure to have him for her friend. He made an instant and powerful appeal to the different persons who had a little to spare at Carville, and with whom he could make free; and from Carville he posted off to Newcastle. At the latter place he met with a gentleman in the street, who loved him, and could deny him nothing for which he asked. "What now, Crister?" "I want a little help, sir, for a poor widow," he replied, stating her case. "I am without money at present," returned the gentleman, "but go to my house, and tell the servant to give you such a sum," naming the amount. Crister modestly hitched in another sentence, which rendered the case a little more impressive, than he found he had made it by previous statement. "Well," returned the gentleman, "let so much be added to it, and tell the servant I sent you." In this way, he procured ample relief, and made the widow's heart rejoice.

The religious character of Crister had reached the writer's ears previously to his residence in Newcastle; and as such per-

sons occupy a more than usual share of his attention and regard, the eye was naturally directed toward him. His first appearance to the biographer was in a love-feast held in Brunswick Place Chapel, September, 1834. The circumstances were exceedingly favourable. The Rev. R. Aitkin and Mr. W. Dawson were at that time on a visit to Newcastle and its vicinity. It was emphatically a visit in *season*, as well as a time of *refreshing*. There was a great deal of high and holy feeling in the members of society, while they had to rejoice in an accession to their ranks. Crister participated in the general joy, as well as shared in the sacred influence that prevaded the religious assemblies. The last time the writer conversed with him was at Carville, May 17th, 1835; and then, as he had been found in the intervals between, he was on his way upward, singing and making melody, not only in his heart but with his lips, to the Lord. His joy might be described in the way that a fair author has described a brook, not as gliding quietly through a small green meadow, but as sounding its approach, as in the glad spirit of its young life it comes leaping and dancing down a rocky gorge. His was a "fulness of joy."

In the course of the week preceding the love-feast, as he was on his way from the workings to the bottom of the pit shaft, in order to leave for the day, he came up to an old man, who was bent with his face down-

ward, cleaning out the curved line in which the wheels of the carriages run, upon which the corves are placed. Being a little dull of hearing, and intent on his work, Crister's hand was on his shoulder, and sending its echo along the working, before he was well aware of any one being near; and with the clap, instantly followed—"Why, man, there is a crown hanging over your head!" Like one of Bunyan's inimitable characters, who is represented in a somewhat similar light, but as much more intent upon the earth, the old man turned his eye upward, as if to gaze upon some new appearance; but on seeing Crister, the sentence was at once interpreted, and he had a lecture not to forget the "things above" while engaged with "things below,"—to take heed to his own steps, while "*creasing*" the way of the wagon. The circumstance was told with great effect, and without the least parade, by Crister, who carefully improved it in the love-feast.

Prayer and praise were the delight of his soul; and as he was particularly apt at catching a tune, he very often imported a new one, on his return from a visit to the societies; thus ringing a constant change, with a view to enlighten and elevate the mind. "Sweet Home"—"Hallelujah"—"Come to Jesus"—"Babylon," &c., were favourites; and to give wider circulation to one with which he was greatly enamoured, he, poor as he was, employed the press. Though extremely par-

tial to the sprightly in music, yet from the correctness of his ear, and the influence which melody had upon his heart, he manifested less vitiated taste than is often found in humble life, and among persons possessed of stirring qualities, with an inclination to revivalism. The introduction of tunes more fit for the circus and the chase than the house of God, is a subject of occasional regret; and the misfortune is, when once they find their way among persons similar to the originators—possessed of bad ears, weak heads, and warm hearts—they become exceedingly offensive, and are not easily abandoned. In this way Crister was not in the habit of offending.

The late Rev. Wm. Bramwell highly esteemed him for his piety and simplicity; and Crister, with equal veneration, adverted to his character and labour of love. A short time before his death, he dreamed that he saw the sainted form of Bramwell, who told him to live in a state of preparation for heaven, and then beckoned him away from earth. This, though a dream, had a happy influence on his mind, and became an incentive to holiness. It was sunny and cheering in its character; and its images, golden bright, glowed in his recollection.

Crister and this excellent minister of God very often repaired to the chapel at Carville, as early as three o'clock in the morning, for the purpose of mutual prayer. On one occasion, Mr. B. called at his house in the course

of the day, inquiring for him, without stating either his object or expressing a wish to see him. When Crister reached home, he was informed of the fact, and proceeded to Mr. Reay's, where Mr. B. was taking up his abode. On the latter being informed that Crister had called, and being asked whether he had not been inquiring for him, he returned, without giving a direct answer,—"Step in." No sooner was the room door closed, than Mr. B. said, "Let us pray a bit;" and so saying, knelt and prayed with his usual fervour. After him, Crister prayed; and when the meeting concluded, Mr. B., without any farther remark, grasped him by the hand, and dismissed him, saying, "There, that will do." On Crister leaving the house, it instantly flashed into his mind, "Mr. B. has heard something unfavourable of me, and has employed this method to try my *spirit*, in order to see whether I have access at a throne of grace." To persons who knew Mr. B., Crister's conjecture would not appear at all unnatural; and to those who knew Crister, whatever a holy jealousy might prompt, on the part of Mr. B., an unfavourable report was not calculated, had it even been the case, to produce a deep impression. He kept at the utmost distance from sin; and understood well the import of those interrogatories of Solomon, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go on hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?"

He knew that to avoid evil, was not to go near it.

A visit from Mr. Bramwell was no uncommon occurrence to him. While engaged in his garden one day, Mr. B. drew near, and hung upon the rails. "That is a fine bed of tulips," said he. Crister, who was partial to his garden, was pleased with the remark, and acquiesced in its justice. "They are all *beautiful*," proceeded Mr. B.;—"they all *differ*—and they all yield a *fragrance*." This was equally agreeable with what preceded. "The children of God," continued Mr. B., "are all different; hence the propriety of their *bearing* with each other,—for there is something beautiful—something to be commended in all." A moral lecture of this kind was as acceptable as remarks on natural beauty. Some time elapsed, when Mr. B. changed the subject; and having seen Crister put some seed into the ground, he inquired, "Don't the cocks and hens come now and then, and scratch it up?" "Yes, sir," returned Crister. "And how do you feel on those occasions?" subjoined Mr. B. "Why, it is hard," returned Crister; "but then I have grace to bear it." He knew, that if Christians ought to bear with each other, such intelligences should bear with the irrational part of God's creation. Such, indeed, was his native kindness, that he would have as soon thrown some grains of corn down to them, as attempt to injure them on driving

them away. It was only the principle carried out to these, that he exercised toward his own species—heaping "coals of fire on the head" of an enemy.

But he was exercised in another way. The soil was poor, and manure was scarce. The latter might have been obtained by making free with what belonged to the colliery; and another person had thus made free, in order to enrich his crop of potatoes. Crister's conscience would not suffer him to take the slightest liberty with another person's property; and his poverty would not allow him to go any distance from home to make a purchase. The result was, that he was obliged to set his potatoes without manure: but such was the honour God conferred upon his integrity, that, though both gardens were distinguished for the same soil, he had a much larger crop than the person who had planted his *sets* in the heart of stolen materials.

CHAPTER VI.

A few of his last days—Visit to one of his daughters—Has a prayer-meeting in a field—Receives his last ticket—Remarkable expressions—Attends the bed of the dying—The spirit of prayer—Family worship—Descends the pit for the last time.—The CATASTROPHE—Religious aspect of the subject—Extent of the calamity—The rapidity with which the fire moved—Kindness, mixed with severity—The guilty spared—A merciful providence in the timing of the event—The general distress occasioned.

THE suddenness of the removal of the subject of this memoir will only admit of our hovering around the open ground of his *last days*, rather than of our entering within the sacred enclosure of his *last moments*;—of our viewing him, when unconscious of any one looking at him in the ordinary business of life, rather than when sitting for his religious portrait. These are the times and seasons for arriving at real character,—when a man is moving among men, insensible of their presence and of their eye.

He visited one of his daughters, who is married, and resides at Little Town, no great distance from Durham, on the banks of the Wear, the Saturday before his death. It appears as though the invisible hand of Heaven had conducted him thither, to give to her and her family his last blessing. He called upon different friends, both on his route to the place and on his return,—spoke to them, and prayed with them. Not finding any place appropriated to public worship at Little Town,

among his own people, and anxious to enjoy some means of grace, which he could not do in a private dwelling, the houses being cleaned for Sunday, he collected a few serious persons together,—mostly young men; and said, "Come, lads, the fields will do for me; and if they will do for you, we shall have a prayer-meeting in the open air." So saying, he led them on to a retired nook on the Saturday evening, and there, as a preparation for the Sabbath, in that place, unfrequented for such purposes, they all knelt down, and prayed alternately—for, he afterward observed, in the language of an eminent statesman in reference to another subject, "we had a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether;" thus enjoying that which apostles and primitive Christians—only on another day and in a more frequented spot—enjoyed, when "on the Sabbath" they "went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and sat down, and spake unto the" persons "which resorted thither." After this out-door exercise, he sat up till late, singing and praying with a few friends, to whom he observed, among other things, that he could not satisfactorily account for his being there at that particular time.

On the forenoon of the Lord's day, a young man—a local preacher—addressed such as were disposed to hear him in a private dwelling. Crister was there; and the preacher had the aid of his prayers,—having prayed

twice publicly at the close of the address; observing to his daughter afterward,—"The *lad* seemed frightened, and I wished to encourage him. I thought it was a pity for him to come such a long way, and get nothing for it. But the Lord warmed our hearts, and he took some *fire* back with him." While with his daughter, he was incessant in his exhortations to *piety* and *unity*. Desirous of obtaining as much of the bread of life as he could, he stopped at Shiney Row, in the Sunderland circuit, on his return, and heard a sermon on the Sunday evening; which was to him what the "cake baken on the coals, and the cruse of water," were to Elijah, who "in the strength of that meat" prosecuted the remainder of his journey.

A person speaking to him on the dangers to which colliers were exposed, he remarked, "We should always be ready; then sudden death will be sudden bliss." On the Tuesday before he died, he said to those who were sitting around him, "Let us live to God, and we shall go off to heaven some day like a clap of thunder." It is impossible not to associate his quickly approaching exit with this form of expression;—sudden and unexpected to himself, and solemnly impressive to others. On the evening of the same day, he received his last society ticket from Mr. Mann, on which occasion he expressed himself as happy in the religion he possessed; saying, in the course of the evening, when

speaking of vital godliness, "I always like to be in the *sun*, and on the *warm* side of the *wall*;" a metaphor well understood by pitmen, who before the sun has obtained too much power to be oppressive—say, in the month of May, will group together, and squat themselves by the side of a wall; and there, while enjoying social intercourse with each other, will bask beneath his animating beams.

The nearer we approach the spot where we have to part with this good man, the more hallowed becomes the character of his personal piety, and with the greater confidence we leave him to pursue the brief remainder of his pilgrimage alone. In the course of the evening previous to his death he visited a son of Henry Holt, of Bigge's Main, who was ill, and apparently not likely to recover. He prayed with him and gave him such advice and encouragement as seemed to be required. In his prayer he dwelt particularly on death; and then, as if a sudden gleam of light had opened upon him, and he had beheld heaven immediately over his head, he broke away in a transport of joy, repeating—"It is *down* to death, and *up* to glory;—*down* to death, and *up* to glory!" leaving an impression, when coupled with his own almost immediate *descent* into the pit, and sudden *ascension* to heaven, that there was something prophetic in the employment of such phraseology at that particular time. And what renders it more remarkable is, that on leav-

ing the young man, after cheering him forward, just as he was about to enter "the valley of the shadow of death," he is stated to have said,—"Go on; we shall not have long to stay; I may get to heaven perhaps before you."

On his return home he called on another family: and as he rarely left any without prayer, he engaged in the exercise here as he had done by the couch of the sick, where his words had been dropping balm. He was generally *short*, both in his *prayers* and in narrating his religious experience. But on this occasion, he prayed fluently, feelingly, earnestly, and believingly, for nearly the space of an *hour*. Time and space seemed annihilated; he was taken up to God in spirit, and placed immediately at the foot of the throne of grace, where he felt all the force of that brief sentence, which is commensurate in its encouragements with the longest prayer —"Ask, and ye shall receive."

He did not leave home on the Thursday morning till about half past eight o'clock; and, what is remarkable, when engaged in family prayer with his wife, he gave utterance to the following lines, offering them as a petition on the behalf of himself:—

"O that without a lingering groan,
I may the welcome word receive;
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live;"

little aware that both were to be laid down in

the space of six hours. Such things, if they do no more, and were even unconnected with any thing like heavenly intimations, show a certain preparedness of mind for a nobler state of existence.

The hour arrived when he was to be "counted with them that go down into the pit," and when, on his descent into the bowels of the earth, he was to see the blue heavens above him, as through a telescope for the last time. Then, it was literally with him—"Down to death, and up to glory."

The last time he was seen alive by those who left the pit, was some time between eleven and twelve o'clock in the forenoon previous to the accident. He was sitting by the side of one of the workings, taking a lunch, as a person passed him on his way out of the pit. And the next time he was seen was, on the afternoon of the next day, Friday, when he was found a corpse.

THE CATASTROPHE.

Subjects are contemplated by different men in different lights. The dreadful catastrophe at WALL'S END Colliery, Thursday, June 18th, 1835, through which 102 human beings lost their lives,* and had their doom fixed for ever, agreeably to their several characters, will be viewed by a *philosopher* in a purely *scientific* light, who, anxious to ascertain *natural*

* See a complete list of the sufferers at the close.

causes, will be equally—and laudably too—solicitous to prevent a recurrence of similar dreadful effects. But his views are bounded by the earth on which he stands, as his object is to prevent the premature extinction of mere animal life. The aspects of the subject with the *Christian* are *moral* and *religious*. He stretches his thoughts through the vista of time: they reach the shores of eternity; and there he himself stands in his imaginings—imaginings stamped into realities by a divine revelation—stands, with an immortal spirit in his momentary keeping, with the ocean before him, flashing with light, or veiled in midnight darkness,—an ocean that can neither be fathomed nor sounded, and which is without a shore. Whatever is launched there, floats on for ever—on—and on—in misery or felicity. Time, to him, assumes the importance of eternity; religion is every thing; and in contemplating the scene, the soul—lost or saved—is never for a moment absent from his mind—its final state incessantly haunting his thoughts like an apparition.

As every thing *below ground*, and connected with the *colliery*, is to be found in a report of the *depositions* taken during the coroner's inquest on the case, we shall direct our attention chiefly to what took place *above ground*. The persons summoned to meet on such inquests have to do with the *world;* we have to attend to the *church:*

they have to look to the *body;* we have to look to the *soul:* they have to attend to the *temperal comforts* of the man, by improving the state of the pit; we have to attend to the *spiritual* and *eternal* interests of those around, in order to prevent a plunge into another pit —the scorching influence of another fire.

The writer, who was called upon, with others, to improve the melancholy occasion by preaching sermons in different places, and in each service to make an appeal to the benevolence of the Christian public, on the behalf of a number of bereaved families, some of whom had their principal earthly props removed from beneath them, stands in the relation to the subject of a person in the midst of the slain—having witnessed almost every scene of writhing agony—and heard almost every form of expression of which excessive grief could lay hold, to give utterance to its inward workings, and force a passage for its relief. The catastrophe occurred about two o'clock on the *Thursday* afternoon—at the moment he was preparing a sermon for the dreadful accident which took place in *Nuns' Field,** only about half

* Just at the moment, too, and only a few hundred paces from the place where the writer was sitting, the workmen were digging out the dying and the dead, while he was reading Luke 13th chapter, in his own house; little aware that he should be so soon presented with a practical illustration of the 4th and 5th verses, and that he should be called upon, in a discourse founded on those verses, to improve the occasion, in the Wesleyan Chapel, Brunswick Place. At the close of the sermon, a collection was made, for the widows,

an hour from the same time the *preceding Thursday;* and not being in the way of hearing of it till Friday morning, he was prevented from visiting the "field of graves" and the houses of mourning earlier than the forenoon of that day. He was regular, however, in his visits from Newcastle, on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, up to which period the body of only *one* remained in the pit, the dangerous state of which prevented even filial and parental affection from breaking through to reach him. Like a person under the influence of strong temptation, with neither the power to resist nor yet fit to be there, because of excited feeling, he nevertheless availed himself of every opportunity of affording solace to the distressed;—visiting the families from house to house—speaking to some—praying with others—and as often compelled to turn aside, in order to regain the utterance that had been choked by the sympathetic sob. Every process was witnessed from the body being stretched in the cart—conveyed home—met by the agonized family at the door—

orphans, and surviving sufferers, amounting to £28 15s. 1d. By this accident, twenty-one persons were injured;—ten of whom were taken to the Infirmary—four killed on the spot—and three died soon afterwards;—the remainder were taken to their own homes. *Four widows* and *ten orphans* were left to buffet their way through life. It may be said, with regard to the two melancholy events, so near to each other, and in the same neighbourhood, "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God."

laid in the coffin—shrouded—waiting for the day of interment—again carried forth—and attended by mourners to the house appointed for all living.

There is not on record,* in the same district, a single case in the immense chapter of accidents among the colleries in which there has been such a loss of human life as in this —105 sufferers in all, and only *four* brought out alive, and these the subjects of serious injury. Not an individual, however, was left to say *how* or *where* the accident commenced. Experienced and practical men had to supply the lack of necessary information, during the inquest, with conjecture, probability, inference, and analogy.† All that is positively

* See a table at the close.

† It may be observed, that it has been ascertained, in the course of exploring the mine since the accident occurred, that the explosion did not take place in any part of the working districts, nor at a Davy-lamp; but that it must have happened in the gass-pipe drift, from the first S. W. district, in the G., or church pit, out of which the pillars were worked some years ago. Two men, William Thompson and William Johnson, were blasting down the roof-stone to make horse-height for a new rolley-way, near to a "stenting," which led through the coal barrier wall into the pipe-drift. A *man* door was placed in this stenting, for the convenience of the wastemen going into the pipe-drift; and from the situation in which William Thompson's body was found, there can scarcely be a doubt that he had either opened this man door, and fired the gass in the pipe-drift, or that he had approached it so near, that the gas, oozing through the crevices of the door, had fired at his candle, and, passing along the pipe-drift, like a train, exploded the gas in the first S. W. district, as already stated. This district has been in a *crept* state for several years, and could not be ventilated; it has, therefore, been standing dead, or charged with gas. John-

known, from occasional visible traces of its effects, is, that the destructive element was let loose from its confinement—by another, it may be, than human hand, and that, like an unchained monster—raging through various workings—"*its* breath," in the language of Job, "kindling coals, and a flame going out of *its* mouth,"—destroyed every thing possessed of life in its immediate track—first exploding at the shafts contiguous to Wall's End Church—then, dividing its strength, partly directing its course westward to the Carville shaft, where a minor explosion took place, but chiefly northward, in the terror of its power, to another shaft—the principal shafts forming a kind of triangle, and from three-quarters to upward of half a mile distant from each other—exploding a third and last time at the northern entrance,—the ground shaking the while, agreeably to the testimony of persons passing along the Shields road at the time. But though its last convulsive throes were felt above, and its last voice was heard, its work was not finished. It returned, so to speak—took another form—more silent, but not less certain—suffocating, with what is called the "*after-damp*," those

son was working in the stow-board, at some distance from Thompson, with a Davy-lamp, which he still held in his hand when his body was found. His body was not at all burnt, while that of Thompson was severely scorched. As no fire had been in those divisions of the workings where the Davy-lamps were used, it is reasonable to conclude that the explosion had not happened from any mismanagement of, or accident to, the lamps.

whom the *fire* had spared—meeting them as they were escaping from other workings—workings, which, as yet, had been unvisited, and in which they had only heard the thunder of its voice; thus verifying, on a minor scale, the general ravages of death, which, in the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, was painted in the character of a goddess, holding a sickle in her hand, with this inscription, "*Nemini parco*,"—I spare no man. Scarcely any occurrence is capable of affording a more striking exemplification of part of Byron's description of "The destruction of Sennacherib" than this—omitting the supposition of its having been a heavy *judgment* upon the sufferers, and that they were indiscriminately the *foes* of God and his people, as were the Assyrians:—

——"The angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their breast but once heaved, and for ever grew still!"

Here, "the angel of death" did but just *breathe* in the *face* of both man and beast, while the *blast* of his voice, on its way upward, told the living relations the tale of *death's* doing below. And O, with the silence of that voice, what was the *stillness* beneath! and what the commotion above! Fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wives and children, in hopeless misery, flying from house to house, in open day, thinking of nothing but the suffocated, scorched, and

mangled remains of those who went forth in health and strength to labour only a few hours before, and who, though then hushed in death, upward of one hundred and forty fathoms immediately beneath their feet, were still living in their affection—affection reinvigorated by the circumstances of the occasion—and yet without any possibility of coming near them for some time, owing to the deadly impure state of the pit!—the *choke-damp* and *after-damp*, as described by miners, though differing in character, being the same in their effects on human life.

All this was effected nearly within the short space that elapses between a flash of lightning and a peal of thunder. "You see yon shaft," said a good man to the writer, pointing from the one north, where both stood, to the one east of Carville, at which the first explosion was heard; "you see yon shaft," said he. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, he inquired, "How long, think you, was the blast in passing through all the workings—going up to the west toward Carville, exploding there, and coming and exploding here?" Not being aware of the distance underground, a negative reply was the only one that could be made. The narrator deeply affected with what it had cost him during its brief but destructive progress—having lost *three sons* by it, added, "Only two minutes and a half!" Another friend, however, who had more experience in these

things, and had been connected with the pit between twenty and thirty years, stated the time occupied to have been little more than a minute—having travelled about two thousand yards, or one mile and a quarter. What a minute! both in itself—as to the vastness of the work executed, and to the persons concerned—in fixing their final state! If the whole circumference of the earth be but a point of the universe; and if all the time that has been, or ever shall be, may be comprised in one single instant of eternity, well may we exclaim in the language of the psalmist, "What is man?" He is, in person, a mere point of this circumference; and his life is but a moment of that eternity. But on that *moment all* is suspended—heaven with all its glories—hell with all its terrors! The beginning, the middle, the end of that moment, is important to man; but especially the latter, when unapprized of its arrival,—for there, time closes, and eternity begins, or more properly opens. A minute! to last for ever in its effects!

Another man, who was standing near the shaft where the first explosion was heard, and waiting with others on the Saturday for intelligence from those who had gone down, through pure affection, to combat death in his own domains, was interrogated by the writer on different points, when he said—"I was working here when *she* first blasted. The first thing I heard was a rush of air, accom-

panied by a cloud of dust, in the midst of which was a piece of cloth or something, which I took to be some of the men's clothes, and which was carried away in the air. On seeing and hearing this, I knew what was to follow; and *she* went off directly." David had *seen* nothing like this, when he said, "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it—thick clouds passed—and coals of fire." But the royal bard had *heard* of God's terrible doings; he described him as manifested in his *works;* and here too—if the earth is his, and providence is still in operation—we are bound to acknowledge his hand: as much so, indeed, as when Habakkuk said, "Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet." O, yes, God was in the "*blast!*"

Destructive, however, as was the blast, the stroke was tempered with mercy. Two men, who were employed at the furnace at the bottom of the shafts adjoining Carville, were saved. These are termed two *upcast* shafts. As soon as the men found that the pit had fired, they immediately threaded their way through the least dangerous workings to the northern shaft, which is a *downcast*, and which experience taught them was the best course to pursue. Speaking to one of them on the subject of his escape, he said, "It is marvellous how ever we got out. I was scarcely sensible for some time, and ex-

tremely weak. The air was so bad, that I was almost gone; but I struggled hard. It is all mercy; for if God had not helped, there would have been no possibility of escaping with life." The other person who was preserved, and snatched as a brand from the burning, was Thomas Kennedy, who for the first time himself attended class with Crister, on the first night of the latter meeting in one, as noticed in a previous page; and was thus closely connected with the stroke that deprived him of natural life, as he had taken the first step with him in the beginning of a religious existence. So true is it, in a thousand cases besides the one mentioned by our Saviour, and where there is very often almost equal danger, "the one shall be taken, and the other left."

A very remarkable case of providential interference was, the preservation of *John Reed*, rolley-wayman, *Robert Moralee*, doorkeeper, aged 70, *John Brown*, onsetter at the shaft, and *Martin Middleton*, a boy about fourteen years of age. One of these was a member of Mr. Reay's class. All were more or less burnt; but John Reed had a leg broken; and to add to the poignancy of his feelings, he lost two sons by the accident. But of these farther notice will be taken.

One youth was lost, of the name of Appleby, who went to work for another, to allow him to go to Newcastle races, which were then being held. The survivor saved his own

life at the immense cost of that of another. Here was occasion both for gratitude and repentance. It was a mysterious providence that permitted the comparatively innocent to be punished in the place of the guilty; but God the Father did no more here than he countenanced in the death of his own Son; and as he effected our salvation by that measure, he might, in a way unknown to us, turn to a good account the youth's disaster in the pit, while the more criminal of the two —and therefore the least fit for a sudden removal, was indulged with a longer space for repentance. The stipulated wages for Appleby's service was one shilling; that shilling cost him his life.

But the most marked providence was visible in the *timing* of the general stroke. Had the accident occurred a little *earlier* on the *same day*, both *old* and *young* would have been swept out of existence—scarcely any of the underground workmen would have been left about the colliery—and the houses would have been filled with only *widows* and *orphans*. Most of the *married* men had reached the day —some half an hour, two hours, or more, before the desolating element was let loose upon human life. The divine Being, severe as was the stroke, mercifully drew the line across the multitude of moving beings just at the time and toward the place when and where—in a mighty sweep, the separation would be the least afflictive in its *consequences*

to the living. In Mr. Reay's class, most of the boys and young men were taken—taken like so many lambs prepared for the slaughter—removed, however, more suddenly than even these—and exchanging *literally*, in the language of Crister, who suffered with them—language which, in his rapt moments he was wont to employ—" exchanging the *pit cap* for a crown of glory !"

Speaking to one of the men who left work before the pit exploded, he said he had been only two hours out when the accident took place. " You were within *two hours* then," returned the writer, " of *eternity*." The man seemed impressed with a sense of the divine goodness, and was grateful for his escape. With many of the people the catastrophe was turned to a profitable account. " It is a loud call," said a woman who had a son taken away by the stroke : adding, " yes, yes—it is a loud call indeed." Going into another house, and on the question being proposed,—" Have *you* sustained any loss by the accident?" a female replied, who was pensively seated alone, " No,—there are none gone out of *this* house, of *our own ;* but," she added, " we have *friends* taken away by the stroke : it has scarcely missed a house !" It gave a person familiar with Scripture an idea of the distress of the Egyptians when their first-born were taken away from before their eyes ; and the writer felt in his visits on the Monday, as if he scented death in every

direction,—being reminded of that sacredly poetical allusion to one of the noblest, but irrational portions of God's creation, in a case in which the dead and the dying strew the ground—"he smelleth the battle afar off." So general was the calamity, that though a house might be missed here and there, over which the destroying angel passed, without having visited the inmates with *actual loss;* yet so numerous were the *connecting links* of *relationship*, that one house of mourning was added to another, with very few spaces between; and even persons exempt from it partook of the general gloom which was thrown over the neighbourhood, like one vast pall, where every feeling, except that of heart-rending grief, was dead within the people.

CHAPTER VII.

The Catastrophe continued—Pleasing indications of a preparation for another world in some of the juvenile sufferers—The Scriptures—Prayer preferred to necessary food—Sunday school teachers' festival, and its painful associations—Extorted confessions, and knowledge of character—Exemplification of Christian fortitude and resignation in the bereaved—Unruffled repose—Agony blended with tenderness—Painful disappointment—The mother and the Christian—Agonizing reflections—Sources of consolation—Circumstances heightening the distress consequent on the loss of life, in the widow and the fatherless—Despair—Consequences of the disfigured state of some of the bodies.

As religion had her triumphs in some of the bereaved parents and friends after the

event, so she had made her glorious entrance, and taken up her abode in the bosoms of several of the actual sufferers before it took place. Eleven members of the Wesleyan Society were killed, nine of whom belonged to Mr. Reay's class, of Carville. Of two families those of William Mason and John Bell, much might be said on the subject of suffering; *eight* persons were swept away by the calamity—*four* out of each. *Two* out of the four, belonging to *Bell's* family, met in the class just named. One of these read the thirteenth chapter of Genesis the night before his death, repeatedly calling the attention of his mother to different portions of it, which seemed to impress his heart, saying, with filial affection, "Do you hear that, mother? Is not that good?" The Bible was his daily companion; and the voice of God, in his own word, was one of the last voices that fell on the mother's ear the night before the event, through the medium of her son,—little aware that she was so soon to hear the voice of the same Being in providence, speaking *of* that son's death, through whom she had heard the word of life, and who was so anxious to promote her immortal interests by reading to her its sacred contents. Few things are more calculated to embalm the memory of a child than this—as a last act to a tender mother.

A still more touching case, however, occurred in the history of a boy who was one of the principal supports of his widowed mother, and

of whose conversion notice has been already taken. He was also a member of Mr. Reay's class, and when he is stated to have been the companion of *Crister*, the name of "the little old man" will be immediately recollected. Thomas Ellerton had to rise early on the morning of the day on which he exchanged worlds. Being rather straitened for time, and anxious to be at the pit at the stated period, a dispute arose between breakfast and family prayer—the wants of the body and the wants of the soul—which of the two should *break* its *fast*. If breakfast were to be taken, there would be no time for family prayer; and if family prayer were performed, there would be no time for breakfast. The breakfast was abandoned, and he knelt, like a little Samuel —being, as before stated, only thirteen years of age—before the family altar, where he implored the divine blessing upon himself and upon his widowed mother, cheerfully foregoing a regular meal, rather than that the soul should not break its fast at a throne of grace. When the writer called upon the bereaved mother on the Monday, and to look at the corpse of her child as he lay in the coffin, "black, but comely"—for there was great placidity about the small regular-featured countenance, he found that the first flood-tides of grief had partially subsided. But on her opening a drawer, the sluices were again in action. Anxious to cherish the least recollection of piety and church-membership,

she took out a pretty little box, in which he had deposited his society tickets; which were to her more precious than rubies, and on which she fixed her eyes as long as she could see through her tears. These were pleasing mementoes of his having belonged to the church on earth, of which the church in heaven constitutes but a part,—like two apartments in the same building—the one the ground-floor, and the other the "upper room" in the New Jerusalem. In that "*upper room*" his friend *Crister* and he would appear about the same moment of time, as they had received their tickets at the same period, in the same class, and from the same hand, on the Tuesday evening;—appear like the aged Paul and the youthful Timothy—united on earth, and reunited in heaven. And what, to the writer, formed an interesting little incident, was, that he had the happiness to see the widowed mother, who was then not a member of religious society, and for whose conversion to God her orphan boy had often prayed, occupying his seat in the class in which he met, the first time of its meeting after the accident.

Many of the boys, and several of those of riper years, who lost their lives on the *Thursday*, had been looking forward with joy to the *Saturday* some days before. The latter of these was the day which was fixed for the Sunday scholars, the teachers, and several friends, to take *tea* together. Cakes, and

other necessaries were ordered, for about four hundred persons, and tea was to be served in a field adjoining the house of Mr. Reay, who, together with Mrs. Reay, had the principal management of the festive preparations. The writer had agreed to go down from Newcastle to Carville, to share in the joys of the occasion, and to deliver an address to the teachers. Alas, the horizon was soon overcast; and that which was a sunny landscape in the distance, assumed the form of a desolate wilderness. Mr. Nichol, who had begun to complete the order for the cakes, before any countermand could arrive, sent a considerable number of them from Newcastle; and the very cakes intended for the living children on the Saturday—to the no small joy of the parents, were eaten by those very parents, and others, on the Sunday, while the bodies of those for whom they were originally destined lay coffined for the tomb in their presence; eaten, indeed—but with tears, and as with "bitter herbs" before the Lord—the religious *gala* being turned into a scene of "lamentation and wo."*

* When some of the hewers were leaving the pit, about two or three hours before the explosion, one of them was accosted by Robert Combey, in a tone of triumphant anticipation with—"O what a day we shall have on Saturday!" He had his enjoyment; but it was the light of that day, which "never more shall close," and which broke upon him soon after he had uttered the sentence. This young man was awakened under the ministry of the Rev. Robert Aitkin, while preaching in the New Road Chapel, Newcastle, October 1834; a man who, under God, moved about at the

The knowledge and influence of *character*, both with regard to the religious and irreligious, was remarkable on the occasion, and shows not only the deep conviction of the necessity of personal piety which rests upon the human mind, but the preference given to those who possess it. Crowds of persons were generally near the shafts, or in their neighbourhood; and on the bodies being brought from the pit, the pressure was sometimes considerable. Immediately on the names being announced, the buz went around, —"He was a gambler—he was a drunkard," &c. On the reverse, as in the case of the Bell's, it was agreeably echoed and re-echoed,—"Aye, he was a good lad that!" Thus, *character* was not only *known*, but its *value* was *felt* and *acknowledged;* and seemed to regulate the *hopes* and *fears* of the by-standers, in whose minds there was evidently a connection at the moment between the *past* and the *future*—the by-gone life and everlasting destiny of the dead. God has a monitor within; and Christian light, in a neighbourhood where the gospel is preached, is too diffusive in its character, not to enable men

time like a ministerial earthquake. And although it was difficult sometimes—to change the metaphor—to hear the cries of the wounded for the roar of the cannon; yet the slain of the Lord were to be found after many days; and these remained when the noise had passed off with the discharge of the artillery. And is permanent good to be sacrificed, to avoid a little temporary agitation, which, at most, can only offend the ear of those in whose souls even the melodies of religion have often no place?

on those occasions to "discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." It assumes somewhat the character of a "*last day*," when persons do not only inadvertently sit in judgment upon others, but positively and experimentally pronounce upon themselves.

It was impossible for any one either capable of feeling or at all disposed to reflect, to look upon the scene or listen to the bereaved, without reaping instruction. Religion and human character unfolded themselves frequently in forms the most interesting; and not a few were the triumphs of the former. An excellent man, a member of the Wesleyan society, had a boy among the sufferers. The writer saw him on the Saturday at the shaft where the first explosion was heard: but had visited his residence the day before, in company with Mrs. Reay—who, like an angel of mercy, flew from family to family, to pour consolation into the newly-opened wound. While fathers, sons, and brothers were relieving each other in clearing away the timbers which had been shook out of their places, and choked up part of the shaft, the good man referred to waited among others to take his turn in the perilous work. A finer picture of a *Christian philosopher* could scarcely be presented to the eye in humble life, than was here exhibited. He stood, or moved from place to place, as oc-

casion required, costumed in his coarse, white flannel-jacket, and pit trousers,—calm, recollected, resigned, uncomplaining, and yet evidently the subject of deep feeling. For every one that spoke to him he had an answer of meekness; and yet a word for no one unnecessarily, or who did not interrupt the silence that reigned. Like his pattern, who was as "a lamb before his shearers—so opened he not his mouth." He seemed to have reached the bottom of the cup of which the psalmist drank so deeply, when he said, "I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. I opened not my mouth because thou didst it." The "*sorrow*" that "was *stirred*" in the bosom, was never once rendered visible to the eye by the contortions of the face; and the profoundest "*silence*" was maintained on every subject of complaint. The stream was in motion, but it was deep and unruffled: and as noiseless as the waters of Siloa, which are characterized by the prophet as flowing "softly." Not a thought appeared to flit across the silent deep within, beyond—"The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" To some, his undisturbed movements—for, in the language of poetry—

'In *his* very motion there was rest,'

might have been construed into a kind of stoical apathy, or philosophical indifference;

but this could only be the case with the few, and these—extremely hasty and superficial in their observations. He was ready for every purpose for which his aid was required —never hurried in his step—never wanting—the agitations of the occasion never disturbing his equanimity of soul—and yet, never called away in *thought* apparently, for a single moment, from his beloved child and the associate solemnities. There was in the midst of all a certain inflexibility of muscle about the face, where gravity sat blended with meekness and resignation; and if moved at all, only disposed to settle down to greater depths, —ready for continued and increased exercise. Thus he hovered around the fatal spot, unnoticing any one till noticed,—the hand of God sustaining him,—and ready to descend into what had recently become the region of the dead, on the first summons. The class in which his name was enrolled, met in the evening of July second, the day fortnight following the accident. It was the first time of its meeting after the solemn event; and the writer had agreed with Mr. Reay to conduct the service, in order to relieve his feelings as the regular leader. This good man was there, with his eyes lifted upward, as though they would pierce the ceiling on their way to the skies—heaven beaming in his countenance—hallelujah on his lips—and the love of God in his heart. There were melancholy feelings in the meeting; but not a

murmur; though several were present who had sustained severe losses, and several absent, whose seats, and sayings, and characters, were touchingly alluded to, but—numbered at that moment with the blest.

Very different were the feelings and views of another good man—a member also of the Wesleyan society, and one who had laboured to bring up his children in the fear of God. He had *three sons* lost by the accident. Deep gloom settled on the face like a cloud; he was occasionally relieved by a deep sigh and a flood of tears; and anon he would look at the severe side—advert to second causes—and try to reason himself into the propriety of certain precautionary measures which, if employed, would have prevented the whole. The mind was brooding upon the past, instead of improving the present; and an aptitude was perceived and indulged for repelling all approach with consolation by any one, except by such persons as met his own views, and from that which was the result of his own reasonings. And yet, though unwilling to receive comfort himself, he was tender over the sufferings of his afflicted wife. One of his sons was so much disfigured by the action of the fire, that there was no possibility of recognising him by his features. "I only knew him," said he, whispering to a friend who sat by, and from whom he would receive no consolation for himself, and yet afraid lest his partner's

ear should catch the sound of his voice ;—"I only knew him," said he, "by one of the shoes which he had on his feet having some marks by which I distinguished to whom it belonged ; but," continued he, "I durst not tell his mother *that ;*" then, in a burst of agonized feeling again, he added, "that is nothing ; I could bear all that, and more, if I had only an assurance of their happiness." Here the big tears, gushing from their fountains, rolled down his cheeks. Religion was operating in both cases, with regard to these two excellent men ; but it had different subjects to deal with, as different burthens were to be borne : still there was a depth of tender feeling in the latter, who could drink in such copious draughts of grief, and keep it pent within himself—afraid lest the partner of his bosom should obtain one drop more than that which had been unavoidably measured out to her in the course of Providence. His loss was *three* times greater than that of the former ; and considering its extent, the marvel is, that he should have borne it so ably, and that he should have such presence of mind, and such a surplus stock of sympathetic feeling to let out on the occasion for others. He had four children taken from him previously to this stroke, and now had but one son left. Ordinary grace could never have sustained him. He still stood, however, though bent by the tempest, like the firmly-rooted oak on the plain, spreading its branches to heaven ;

"troubled on every side—cast down, but not destroyed;" and was afterward found among the foremost, praying with persons in distress, in Brunswick Place Chapel, Newcastle, on a visit of Mr. Aitkin to the place, bearing a lively recollection of the important change effected by his ministry upon his son Robert, about nine months before, for whose loss he yet mourned as a father, but in whose happiness he rejoiced as a Christian.

To return to the first of these two Christian men: one circumstance was extremely painful, especially to the companion of his life. His wife felt like a mother; and mothers only can comprehend what mothers feel. About two hours and a half after the writer had left the mouth of the pit on the Saturday night, which would be between ten and eleven o'clock, a report got circulated that the boy was living; the tidings were instantly conveyed to the mother, who had been passing through the fire and through the waters for the space of two days and a half; and every thing seemed to betoken—"This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found." There was a boy marvellously preserved as already noticed; but alas,—though good news to another, he did not belong to her! And at the moment she was preparing coffee for her own, which, to a mother, must have been a pleasing employment, he was brought a corpse to the door in a cart. How

the mistake had originated, it is not necessary to state; but it added to the misery of the mother, to whom it was like a second death—placing the cup, as it were, to the lip, only for the purpose of dashing its sweets untasted to the ground—or elevating to an unusual height for the purpose of rendering more terrible the fall.

An excellent companion picture to the Christian philosopher, of whom a slight sketch has just been given, was a good woman, who was deprived of *two sons*. One of the young men had just been brought home on the Monday afternoon, when the writer entered the house, and then lay in the coffin. The body was black, and much burnt. Several females, relatives and others, were in the separate rooms. The mother was also there, but would have been unknown, as such, to a stranger. All were either in deep distress, or much concerned, except herself. There was the same serenity, as was evinced by the father of the boy reported to be alive, but taken home the subject of death. In addition, however, to the breathless calm which seemed to pervade her breast, there was a certain dignified bearing in her port, of which he was not the master, denoting the majesty, as well as the meekness of Christianity. There was no apparent want of maternal feeling; but her own character, duty, and privileges as a child of her Father in heaven, seemed to possess her so fully, that all other relationships were mi-

nor, and regulated by superior considerations. "O," said she to a friend, who knew her well, and what value to place upon her testimony, "I am sometimes almost ashamed of myself, that I cannot weep, and show more of the mother to those who are weeping around me; but God supports me so mercifully in this hour of trial, that I am borne above it." She seemed like Fortitude personified;—the mother and yet the Christian! the weaker vessel made strong through divine grace! solemn, but triumphant—like a martyr in the fire!

Opposed to this was another good woman, a widow, who had lost her husband by a former blast, and a son by the present. "My *bairn*," said she, full of tossing agony, "was no gambler, no fighter, no drunkard; he always came home sober; and if he only found his mother well, all was well: but, for all that, he was not converted to God! O, his poor soul! where is it? I should be content to know that he is happy." All consolation was rejected here also, as in the case of the good man to whom reference has just been made. Religion will not be satisfied with anything short of itself; and like a person receiving the power of vision, the Christian perceives dangers of which he was once insensible, becoming by his enlightenment not only more quick-sighted, but more alive to the perils of others.

While some refused to be comforted for their children, like Rachel, because they were not, there were others with less personal

piety, and with equally little ground of hope, who endeavoured to extract honey from every flower.—"My child," said one, "was a good child. He never found fault with his mother. If he only had bread and water, he was always satisfied with it." These are pleasing reflections; but still they do not constitute the basis upon which we are to found our hopes of heaven.

On going through the different families, sorrow was depicted in every countenance, and the circumstances in which a few were placed, were truly deplorable. A tall old woman sat in a house spare of furniture, and otherwise distinguished for deep poverty. "I lost my husband," said she, "by a pit-accident, some time back; and now I have lost two sons, one of whom has left a *widow* with *three* small *children*, herself having been confined only *nine* days on the day of his death." Proceeding a few doors further along the *row*, the daughter-in-law,—only the *twelfth* day of her confinement, was found seated in a chair by the side of the fire, suckling her infant, with nothing but bitter reflections in the rear, and blighted prospects before her.

Fathers and brothers evinced a fearlessness of danger very often, while trying to force their way to the dead; hazarding life to reach death; and the corpse permitted, after obtained, to remain only a few hours above ground, —each saying in effect, "Give me a burying-place, that I may bury my dead out of my

sight."—One remarked, "I bore it very well, till I came to my own son, and took him up in my arms to carry him away. There were *fourteen* lying in the same place; he was much burnt; but I could have *kenned* him by his make, if I had not seen a feature of his face." A woman who had been deprived of two sons, and had secured the corpse of one of them, observed on the Monday morning, "Had any one told me last Thursday forenoon, that I should have to pass through what I have experienced, I could not have thought it possible for any one to have borne it. I have received one; but I want the other: O, yes, I want the bones of my child." With some—

> "Hope, like the glimm'ring taper's light,
> Adorns and cheers *their* way:
> And still, as darker grows the night,
> Emits a brighter ray:"

But here, alas, hope was deprived of its last *ray;*—all was *bare;*—it amounted, in all its impenetrable gloom, only to "the *bones* of my child," for more than these, the circumstances of the case would not allow her to perceive in the dim, or rather dark distance.

But even when the daring searchers had discovered the bodies, it was, as will be seen, in more instances than one, difficult to identify to whom they belonged—some of them having been claimed, not because of what they were of themselves, but because of what they had on—by the veriest trifle in dress.

A very affecting example of this kind occurred on the Sabbath following the accident. An anxious father, waiting with others, at the mouth of the pit, for the body of his son, mistook, on examining the disfigured remains of those that were brought up, the corpse of another for the one for which he was seeking, in consequence of some article of clothing in which a slight similarity existed. The corpse was borne home, the convulsed feelings of a father and mother were seen in operation by its side, showers of tears were shed over it, and all the attentions were paid to it which sorrow delights—if such an expression as *delight* be admissible on such an occasion—to observe to one who had been enfolded in the warmest and inmost affections of the human soul. A short period, however, before interment, an additional shock was given to parental feeling, by the discovery, that the body over which the afflicted father and mother had poured forth their bitter wailings was the property of others,—others who were anxiously looking and longing for their own, and were only waiting for the opportunity of giving vent to similar bursts of affectionate grief, while the body of their own child, which had come up at the same moment, was lying in a coffin in the neighbourhood of the shaft unclaimed, in which situation it had remained from eleven o'clock on Saturday night till two o'clock on the Sunday afternoon—during which, it lay

in one sense unwept, and at a time when the tears, bedewing his substitute, would have been envied—if known by those to whom that substitute belonged—themselves unaware in the interim that their's had come to the light. This was one of those cases which the wisdom of a Solomon could not have reached by any experiment on parental affection, and which the guiding hand of a kind Providence at length pointed out and explained, for the mournful satisfaction of the separate families. Even among the less disfigured, the lamentation of Jeremiah might have been adopted in reference to many of them—"Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets."

CHAPTER VIII.

Brief extracts from a journal of events—Preparations for descent—Discoveries—Four persons found alive—Their state—Funeral ceremonies—A general visitation—Character of eight young men and boys—Sudden glory—Respect paid to Crister—Position in which he was found—Thomas Reavely—Joseph Lawson—A Christian Sabbath and its duties—Concern for the young—Use of the whole.

JOURNAL.

A FEW extracts from a journal of events kept by the writer, affording a brief view of the daily progress of discovery, after the miscellaneous remarks which have preceded on the general catastrophe, will show not only

the difficulties with which the searchers had to contend, but the suspense in which the different afflicted families were held.

Thursday, July 18th.—Most of the married men, as will have been perceived, had reached the day in safety; and narrow was the escape of many of both the more matured and the young. The explosion took place about two o'clock in the afternoon: and the brother of "Little Tom," so called, who suffered, had only been up about five minutes when the pit exploded. On being informed of the fact, he could scarcely give credit to it. Omitting some of the earlier preparations for descending, it may be remarked, that no time was lost. The scene was one of deep and melancholy interest. In a shed near the G pit were several females, waiting in silent despair the result of those exertions about to be made to recover their relatives, and near them were a number of coffins. In another shed, still nearer the pit, a man was engaged in trimming, cleaning, locking, and lighting Davy lamps, to give light and security to the pitmen about to explore the mine. With these adventurous men, the shed and the space around the pit were crowded. The rain descended in torrents, but they heeded it not. All being in readiness, four men took their Davy lamps, and got into the corf. The signal was given, the machinery set in motion, and instantly they were out of sight. The operation was repeated until about twenty-

eight men had descended. There was no hesitation with any of them; the competition rather seemed to be, which should go down first. All was, however, conducted in silence, except the hoarse voice of the banksman giving the necessary signals. No bodies found.

Friday 19*th*.—In the course of this day, several of the men and boys were found, and by four o'clock in the afternoon, William Crister was brought up, whose lifeless form was presented to his family and friends. He was found in the workings between Carville and Wall's End Church, just a little to the west of the Shields road, beneath one of the adjoining fields. The person who first discovered him, knew him by looking at his back, as he lay on the ground, with seven or eight persons lying beside him. Mr. Mann, who had given him his society ticket on the Tuesday evening, was at the shaft at the time he was brought up, and the writer followed almost immediately. Whenever a body was brought to bank, there was a rush of spectators to the pit mouth. The females eagerly joined the throng, but instantly retired without a word, on perceiving that the body was one to which they had no claim. Twenty-one bodies were found in the course of the day.

Saturday, 20*th*.—It was not till the afternoon of this day that the writer visited the widow of poor Crister. He lay in his coffin. There was a slight graze below one eye, oc-

casioned probably by the fall; and a slight purple was stealing over the face, the features of which expressed a perfect calm.

The writer was at the shaft next the church, in company with Mr. Leppington and Mr. Reay, till between eight and nine o'clock in the evening. But it was not till between ten and eleven that the tidings reached the top that four persons were found alive. Late as was the hour, crowds of persons were upon the ground, it being the shaft which first exploded, and the one which had been partially choked with timber. When the people heard of the living below, the dead—numerous as they were, and painful as were the circumstances—appeared to be forgotten; they jumped, they sang, they shouted, and were in a perfect delirium of joy. On the first two being brought to the bank—the boy and Reed—the crowd broke in, at the peril of being precipitated down the shaft, as well as injuring the exhausted sufferers, and carried them some distance in the large wicker basket, in which the coals are brought to the day. The basket, with its iron trapping—more fit for a cart and horse, than the persons that could conveniently attach themselves to it, was borne off with the apparent ease of a piece of plaited straw. Joy of heart seemed to string every nerve. Even the sufferings of the four persons—when all safely brought up—were partially lost, in the exultations over the remaining spark of life,

which the spectators hoped would soon be briskened into joyous animation, by the same Providence that had preserved them, and now seemed to accost them in the emphatic language of Zechariah, "I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit."

Though the persons thus rescued from destruction were the subjects of occasional delirium, their broken tale, as far as it could be collected, was one of deep interest. They had gone down the pit, on the morning of Thursday, about five o'clock, and had thus been under ground, at a depth of one hundred and forty-five fathoms, for sixty-five hours—and as the explosion took place at two in the afternoon of Thursday, they had been literally entombed alive for fifty-six hours of the above period. Two of them, when taken out, were delirious, and gave incoherent and improbable accounts of what had transpired; another had his leg so fractured as to render immediate amputation indispensable; the fourth had his hands and face scorched, but was perfectly sensible.

John Brown, the most intelligent of the survivors, was at the bottom of the shaft of the G or Church Pit when the accident took place. He was what was called an "onsetter," his duty being to fix the hook at the end of the rope upon the corves of coals previous to their being drawn up from the mine. He stated, that he was in the act of performing his duty, when the pit—what he

called—"fired." He had not the slightest apprehension of danger, and he stated that he had no fear of working in the mine. The blast which came through the pit knocked him down, and he fell with his side upon the tram or rolley, used for bringing the corves of coals. Near him was the little boy named Martin Middleton, and at a short distance the other two men. How long he lay insensible he was not able to conjecture; but when he recovered sufficiently to reflect, he knew that a "blast" had occurred in the pit. The lights were, of course, "extinguished" by the foul air, and on groping about, the first thing he discovered was, that the horse, within a few yards of him, had been killed, either by the blast of fire or the after-damp. He eventually discovered the boy and the other two men. He got some water and refreshed himself and them. One of the men was already delirious; he talked of his wife and his home, and insisted upon stripping his clothes off, under an impression that he was going to bed. In that state he lay upon the floor of the mine; and the poor sufferers continued in this state of living death until the happy hour of deliverance. The individuals thus miraculously preserved did not appear to have suffered from hunger. Brown thought it might be some time about the middle of Friday when he became a little recollected, and concluded at first, that it must have been a long and a dark night through

which he had passed, since he first fell asleep. J. Reed was in the cabin, and it was Brown's opinion that he must have been driven against the side of it, to occasion the fracture.

When the boy was discovered, he was in a state of nudity. He told his father, that he felt himself so hot after he had got burned, that he threw his clothes off, in order to cool himself. He was heard at the distance of twenty yards singing hymns; a circumstance which, in those doleful regions, and at that particular moment, must have produced strange emotions in those who heard him. He had been a Sunday scholar at Carville, and had been exceedingly refractory. But his songs and his instructions came to his aid, to cheer him in the time of need; and he told J. Green soon after he was found, that he would be a good boy in future, and that his his father should never have occasion to flog him again for not going to school. The hymn he was singing when he was found was—"When I was a stranger, Jesus took me in," &c., &c. Forty-four bodies found to-day.

Sunday, 21*st*.—This morning poor John Reed had to undergo the amputation of his broken limb. Among other bodies discovered, that of Wm. Crister, jun., was one; and the father remained uninterred till the afternoon of this day, that both might be laid in the same tomb. The excitement which existed in the neighbourhood of the mine

cannot easily be described. In the afternoon, when the writer visited the place, in company with Mr. R. Wilson, of Newcastle, the whole face of that part of the country was crowded with human beings, to attend and witness the funerals of those whose bodies had been recovered. There was scarcely a house whose door-way, and whose interior, was not filled with mourners; the public meanwhile weeping in sympathy with them. Cart after cart, with two and three coffins in each, attended by dense crowds, followed in long succession to the Wall's End burying-ground. After prayer and singing, the writer and his friend, with multitudes more, attended the corpse of poor Crister. It was melancholy music.

It may not be uninteresting to describe the ceremonies, or customs, which preceded interment in most instances, and which, it is understood, are prevalent throughout the pit districts. When death has occurred, two young men go around the neighbourhood apprizing the inhabitants that such a one is dead, and requesting their presence at the funeral at the time appointed. The young men who perform this service are called "askers." At the time appointed, the people invited proceed to the house of the deceased, dressed in their holyday clothes, and sit down. On the table is placed a cheese, and a supply of bread and ale. Portions of these are handed to the visiters by two

young women dressed in mourning, who are called "servers," and it is not unusual for the men to indulge in a pipe of tobacco in addition. This custom is, however, observed in silence, and with a solemnity and decorum befitting the melancholy occasion. When all the visiters have been "served," the coffin, containing the body, is brought to the door, and placed upon chairs. A hymn is then sung, after which it is borne to the grave, preceded by the "askers," with black scarfs over their dress, and the "servers" with white hoods. After the body follow those who mourn for the deceased, and the attendants bring up the rear. In the present melancholy instance, as has been observed, the bodies were taken to the grave in carts, but a black pall was in each instance thrown over the coffin. In some cases three were taken from one house, and the scenes of distress—the lamentation and wo—visible in every direction, it was impossible to view unmoved. The coffins were furnished by the owners of the mine, who also contributed £1 in addition for the interment of each body. The joiners were engaged on this, as on other days, in making coffins, and carts were employed in conveying them from house to house. Thirty of the sufferers brought up during the day.

Monday, 22d.—This day was devoted by the writer, in connection with Mrs. Reay and Mr. Leppington, to the work of visiting from

house to house, in order to sympathize, pray, or converse with the bereaved families, as their cases might need. Three out of the four who had escaped on Saturday were seen, viz. Moralee, Reed, and Middleton. The faces of the old man and the boy were invisible, resembling balls of raw cotton, with which article they were covered, in consequence of their having been so much burnt. The *old man* spoke a little; and while in the act of speaking, the voice seemed as though it proceeded from an Egyptian mummy, swathed before the eye. The *boy* was dozing a little, but pert and incoherent when awake. *J. Reed* was recollected, grateful to God for his deliverance, though with the loss of a limb; and adverted to the loss of his two sons with deep feeling. The families who had buried their dead were in some instances in deep gloom, and unable to weep, as though the fountains had been exhausted. Those who had their dead lying before them were often affected in a way it is difficult to describe; and those who had not received the objects of their wishes, were looking for relief in that which was calculated only to increase their agony. Poor Reed was like one of those of whom it is said, "He that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken;" he was only destined to live a short time—there was no escape; he was spared till July 4th, when he breathed his last.

On the afternoon of this day, about sixty

bodies were conveyed in carts to the parish church, where they were interred; and toward evening the whole of the bodies had been brought up, with the exception of about fourteen. Wall's End Church stands above the workings of the colliery; so that, in taking into account the situations of the shafts, the "graves," like those of Ashur, were literally "set in the sides of the pit."

This general visitation had an influence beyond that of exciting a mere feeling of sympathy. On such occasions, the vicious and the ill-instructed very often show their antipathy to their superiors, and seek to benefit themselves at the expense of the property and character of others, by exciting prejudice and creating disturbance. Mr. Buddle expressed his surprise and pleasure at the manner in which the men conducted themselves, and the patience with which the calamity was borne; but added to the gentlemen to whom he was speaking, "I understand the Wesleyan ministers have taken great pains in visiting the families." Without attempting to take any credit beyond sheer duty, the writer could not but rejoice in the liberality of the sentiment, expressed by one who is respected as an authority and as a man of talent.—Five found.

Tuesday, 22*d*.—Some of the young persons belonging to Bell's family were buried, and only one was supposed now to be in the pit.

Wednesday, 24th.—One still remained below on the evening of this day; and of all that had been found, not one had suffered through any fall of stone or coal from the roof of the workings. The one remaining was a boy, and was not found till Aug. 12th.

CRISTER AND HIS CHRISTIAN BRETHREN.

Having taken a general view of the calamity, in the course of which references have been made to particular persons, it may be proper to advert more especially to the Christian character, with any other incidental notice, of the companions of Crister. The following were members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society:—

MEN.

1. Joseph Lawson.
2. William Crister, sen.
3. Thomas Reavley.

YOUNG MEN AND BOYS.

1. Robt. Combey,	joined society,	Jan. 1834.
2. John English,	do.	Jan. 1834.
3. Wm. Crister, jun.,	do.	April 1834.
4. Thomas Ellerton,	do.	May, 1834.
5. John Hall,	do.	May, 1834.
6. C. J. Waggett,	do.	May, 1834.
7. Robert Bell,	do.	June, 1834.
8. Richard Bell,	do.	Oct. 1834.

Not to select one, or more, from the list of the *juvenile* part of the sufferers, for the

purpose of farther observation, one subject, which is applicable to all, and which cannot but afford unspeakable pleasure, is, that on the testimony of their leader, who watched over them with tenderness and godly jealousy, not an individual among them ever disgraced his Christian profession after his union with the Wesleyan body. From their upright walk, therefore, collectively, before the world, and their repeated declarations of a growth in grace, there is strong ground to believe, that as they all united themselves in a covenant to God, and entered the militant church the same year, they were all admitted into heaven the same day—nay, saw each other there the same *hour*. O, what a thought! in a coal-pit and in heaven, with only the interval of a few minutes between! With these, as with Crister, it was emphatically "down to death, and up to glory." The pit proved the tomb of each; they descended into it living human beings, and came up glorified spirits;—glorified, though invisible,—for, in the exquisitely wrought musings of Montgomery,—

"The dead are like the stars by day,
—Withdrawn from mortal eye,
But not extinct, they move their way
In glory through the sky;
Spirits from bondage, thus set free,
Vanish amidst immensity,
Where human thought, like human sight,
Fails to pursue their trackless flight."

Though the members of the establishment

are taught to pray against "sudden death," and there is something terrific in it to the by-stander, as well as hazardous to the sufferer, yet on overstepping the grave—on rendering blank the space between, there is something still more transcendant and exhilarating in *sudden glory*. "For we know," says the apostle, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." No sooner is the soul dismissed the body, and so left naked, than the house from heaven comes instantly upon it, and clothes it. "We *have*," it is said—intimating it to be so *sudden* in its operation, that we seem already to triumph in its possession. And this sense is confirmed by the context, where the inspired penman shows, that to be *absent* from the body is to be *present* with the Lord. There are some people who conceive of heaven as though it were far beyond the sun—some hundreds of millions of miles from the earth; and this leads to other notions equally remote and absurd, as though it would take a considerable portion of time to reach the abodes of the blessed, and there would be some danger of the soul missing its way, when let loose, so to speak, into the immense regions of space, without the protection of some well-experienced, angelic guide. A writer of the last century illustrates this subject by the apt simile of a lamp concealed

beneath an earthen vessel, and suddenly emerging from its hiding place.—Let the interior of a spacious building be supposed to be illuminated—say, with nine hundred and ninety-nine lamps, all mingling together in one general blaze. Let an additional lamp be supposed to be concealed, as stated, beneath a black earthen pitcher, brittle in its nature, and mean in its appearance. A person, who enters the apartment, is enraptured with the splendour of the scene—perceives the inverted vessel in a corner—and inquires why it is placed there ; when he is informed, that it awaits the removal of any one who may feel so disposed. The person goes—places his foot against it—when it instantly breaks. The moment, however, the covering is removed, the lamp—before invisible, and beneath it, mingles with the general blaze. So soon as the one is demolished, the other appears ; there is scarcely an intermediate space between the pitcher breaking, and the lamp uniting its lambent flame with those shedding their light around it. Just so with a disembodied spirit. Death no sooner deals his blow, than the "earthen vessel," or the finer porcelain clay, falls in pieces, and the soul, which is "the candle of the Lord," or, as it may be rendered, "the lamp of Jehovah," immediately enters the temple above—mingles with "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven"—with "the spirits of just

men made perfect. The child of God stands on the very threshold of heaven;—another step, and he is in glory. O, yes,

> "Life, like a dome of many-colour'd glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity,
> Until death tramples it to fragments."

Of *William Crister*, senior, little need be added to what has been advanced; for it will have appeared, that of all that were borne hence by the flood of *fire* and *damp* and there were of the devout both old and young—not any of them had acquired the same degree of prominence in society, or occupied the same place in the public mind as himself. He seemed to sit enthroned in the affections of all who knew him; and his position was maintained to the close of his days, as it had been at first secured,—by piety. In different instances, on the family going to purchase articles for the funeral, the persons of whom the purchases were intended to be made, refused to receive payment, stating, as they were in memory of Crister, they felt a pleasure—though a melancholy one, of furnishing them gratis. Others less able, had to pay for the whole of the refreshments furnished on the occasion. Such was the respect paid to his memory, that many of the friends from Newcastle, Shields, and the neighbouring places, visited the house to see the lifeless clay, which, when animated, had yielded them such pleasure to behold. So true it is, as "the Lord God of Israel saith—them

that honour me I will honour." Homer assigns as the reason Patroclus was universally lamented—"He knew how to be good-natured to all men." The Northumbrian miner proceeded farther in Christianity than heathenism could conduct its votaries. He was not only kind and inoffensive, but devout and useful. As a man of peace, he was generally beloved; persons who cherished their prejudices and little antipathies against the Wesleyan body, indulged none against Crister; he was not one of those who was hawked and torn by the malevolent; and if he happened, in the fidelity of his doings, to come across the worst part of human nature, in any one, such were the amiable qualities that he otherwise displayed, that every feeling of resentment was instantly subdued. No one could be found to say, "Let burning coals fall upon *him:* let *him* be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that *he* rise not up again."

One circumstance connected with his death, hitherto unnoticed, ought not to be omitted. He was first discovered among the slain of the Lord by a person of the name of John Green. Like "the captive exile" he had been "hastening, that he should not die in the pit." Several were lying beside him where he was stretched upon the ground with his face downward, his elbows doubled, and his hands, with the palms outward, spread abroad like a fan, immediately before his chest, as he was wont to

expand them, when engaged in prayer, or speaking on the subject of personal religion. A female observing this, after he had been conveyed home, and knowing his devotional attitude, exclaimed—"Why, he looks as if he were praying down to the very hands yet!" Thus had they stiffened; and it was in this exercise, he, no doubt, closed his life—running into the jaws of the very death from which he was fleeing, but showing in the words of the "Christian poet" already quoted—and whose writings will be found in the church of God to the end of time, that

> "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
> The Christian's native air,
> His watch-word at the gate of death;
> He enters heaven with prayer."

Thomas Reavley—another of the Wesleyan group—was born at Carville, in the year 1801. He entered, at an early period, the Sabbath school established in that place among the Wesleyans; and there received impressions which were never afterward obliterated, and instructions which aided him in his Christian course. On one occasion during his scholarship he was induced to act the truant with some other boys. The teacher of course visited him, in order to ascertain the cause of absence. No sooner did poor Thomas see him than his conscience smote him; he was ashamed, condemned, and stood rebuked before his instructer, but gave his pledge never more to absent himself wil-

fully, which pledge he maintained inviolate. It was not, however, till some time about 1823, when he had become a husband and a father, that he first gave himself to God, and then to the church by the will of God. He had stood proof some years against the dictates of conscience, and against the remonstrances and advices of his best friends. When he became a father, the responsibility of that relationship dwelt with deep weight upon his mind. The seed sown in the Sunday school began to put forth the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. Every child was beheld in the light of an important trust received from God. He saw that he could not discharge the duty of a parent, unless he himself possessed personal piety. Instruction and example were necessary in his early teachers, and equally so in himself. In his concern for his offspring, his concern for himself deepened; and he at length became a decided Christian, exhibiting an example worthy the imitation of others. The spirit of piety in him was not a transient blaze, but a steady flame;—not an occasional impulse, but a uniform principle, enabling him to abound in the work of the Lord. As a suitable return for what he had received at the Sunday school, and from a desire to promote the happiness of the rising generation, he became a useful and laborious teacher himself, and a constant attendant on the Sabbath morning prayer-meeting, in order to

implore the blessing of God on the labours of the day. His Christian experience was always simple and profitable; and in his class he generally expressed his assurance of the divine favour, accompanied with a grateful sense of his daily mercies. His mind, some time previous to his death, was unusually elevated, both with present enjoyments and future prospects,—as his prayers also, in the public meetings, had been distinguished for their fervour. On the Sabbath morning prior to the catastrophe, he made some remarks in his class on the uncertainty of life, and the dangers to which he was exposed in his calling, closing with an assurance that whatever became of the body, *the soul was safe.* If we are to entertain a doubt of the eternal safety of such men as these, where shall "the ungodly and the sinner appear!" God will never forsake the panting racer heaving his last breath—the weary pilgrim taking his last step—the aged warrior, in his last struggle!

Joseph—the peaceable *Joseph Lawson*—comes up like a patriarch in the rear. He was born at Colliery Dykes, in the county of Durham, in the year 1772, and was—as far as such a thing can be—a Wesleyan by descent, his parents having both been members of that society for many years. In some memoranda penned by himself, he observes, "When I was a boy, my parents took me to hear the Methodist preachers on the Sabbath; for

when I was left at home at any time, I was sure to profane it. The good spirit of the Lord strove with me often, and showed me that I was wrong; then I was afraid of going to hell. My parents being poor, I was sent very early in life to work; I had consequently a very limited education. This I have often had to deplore."

He proceeds, "In 1789, the family went to work at Bigge's-Main. We at first lived at Ouseburn. It was a bad place for me, and it was well that we resided there only about a year. We returned to Colliery Dykes; at which place a Sunday school was begun in 1790, to which I was sent, and began to learn my A—B, *abs*. A short time after this we removed to Wall's End Colliery. Here I entered into the marriage state, with a steady, careful, industrious young woman. The Lord blessed our industry, and we did very well. After this, we removed to Colliery Dykes again. The Lord was at that time working very powerfully upon my mind; chiefly occasioned by a very narrow escape from imminent danger in the pits, in connection with four other men. I was afraid of both body and soul, and went to hear a sermon one Sunday in the Methodist chapel, under which I felt my mind much drawn out after God. Again we were removed to Wall's End Colliery. This was the beginning of good days to my soul."

In speaking more immediately of those

"good days" he says, "I attended the means of grace at both church and chapel, till I was at length afraid to go to bed without family prayer. I had no intention of joining the Methodists at first, for I thought I could save myself in the church, as well as among them. One night, however, I dreamed that I was dying, and that my wife was standing over me, waiting to see me depart. I felt conscious that devils would come and drag away my soul. I then thought I heard a voice, saying, 'Go to a Methodist preacher.' When I awoke, that portion of Scripture came forcibly to my mind, 'For God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.' I embraced the first opportunity of going to chapel, and heard the late Rev. J. Doncaster preach on, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet into thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments.' This was about the year 1802. I joined the society, being fully sensible that I was a lost sinner, who needed pardon. At first, however, I could not believe, and thought it impossible for any one to know his sins forgiven. But on hearing the Rev. Joseph Benson, my views were altered. I prayed earnestly for it; and one

day, as I was returning home from Newcastle—praying and believing—I received the blessing of pardon. For the space of four or five years, I went on my way rejoicing. The Lord was kind to me,—carrying me in his arms, and scarcely permitting Satan to tempt me."

In this account we perceive the workings of a simple, sincere mind; and his simplicity, as his subsequent life attested, was not an amiable silliness, but that which might be supposed to characterize the "beloved disciple" in mellow age. Joseph, after a five years' walk of peace and joy, was called to pass through the fire, both as to personal and family affliction. He was married twice; and shortly after the death of his first wife, he was unable, through severe indisposition, to attend to his labour for the space of several weeks. His oldest boy was capable of work; and some of his friends knowing his circumstances, urged him to send another, about six years of age, to the pit. "No," he returned, "I am a poor man; I have nothing to give to my family but an *education:* and *that* they *shall* have, if possible." To educate them, however, solely with a view to fill useful or important stations in civil society was not his object. He was attentive both to mind and morals, and was chiefly solicitous to educate them for eternity. His manner of maintaining the sanctity of the Sabbath is worthy of imitation; and it is encouraging to find, in a

family so large, how effective were all his admonitions on the subject.

During the last twenty years of his life, the following observances distinguished the SABBATH OF GOD in his family. Exclusive of his own private devotions and readings, a hymn was sung and prayer was offered up after breakfast. Being a teacher, he then proceeded to the Sunday school, with as many of the children as were able to walk—all washed and decently attired; a picture on which the Saviour would have smiled, had he passed in person, and which could not but have his approval in heaven! The forenoon having been devoted chiefly to religious instruction, he returned home with his lovely charge to dinner. Aware that Sunday schools only accomplish half their object, unless they lead to *worship*, he conducted them to the house of God in the afternoon, where they all heard a sermon. To render this more effectual, and by way of keeping up a connection in the mind between the homestead and the temple—between religion at home and religion abroad—the chapter was read in the family out of which the text had been taken, a hymn was sung, and prayer again arose, like incense to the throne of God. On this occasion he prayed for the children *individually*, and adverted with peculiar feeling to their state, conduct, and circumstances. Chapel was again resorted to in the evening, where a second sermon was heard; and the

hallowed day was closed by the family group encircling the domestic altar, where the father and priest of the house devoutly thanked his Maker for bringing him "a Sabbath day's journey nearer heaven." Burns has sung the "Cotter's Saturday Night," and Grahame has sung the "Sabbath," but neither of them have adorned their muse with a picture equal to this for simplicity, purity, and spirituality.

A man like this was in no danger of being suspected of being a mere "*eye-servant.*" He was as much distinguished for his fidelity and devotion to the interests of his employers as to his God. In all his ways, both as to his civil and religious duties, he was remarkable for *order* in their observance, *punctuality* as to time, and a mild, peaceable demeanour, in their discharge. He, like Thomas Reavley, the Sabbath before the accident, spoke in the class of the happiness he had experienced that morning while engaged in family prayer: and his leader having to leave before the meeting was concluded, he was left to close the service.

There is a circumstance connected with the death of good old Joseph, which, while it rendered it exceedingly painful, shows the imperfection of human foresight, and the way in which the providence and works of God often thwart the benevolent designs of man. He was what was termed a deputy overman, and was in one of the most danger-

ous parts of the mine, situated about five hundred yards east of the G pit shaft, or shaft which first exploded. Having heard the explosion in a distant part of the mine, while attending to his duty, and disdaining to seek safety in flight, so long as his young charge were exposed to danger, the obvious conjecture is, that he had, with all the order and prudence peculiar to him, hastily collected the Davy lamps—hurried the older boys before him through the mine, "upon" whom were "fear, and the pit, and a snare," —and taking two of the lesser ones by the hand, proceeded with all possible expedition toward the shaft. In this way he had travelled between three and four hundred yards from the place of gathering, and when within only about one hundred and sixty yards from the base of the shaft, a place of probable safety, he was met by the "*after-damp*," which at once put a period to his fears, his hopes, and his toils. There he was found, with eight boys and nine young men—two of the youngest on each side—two immediately behind, whose strength had apparently failed—and the remainder in front of him—unscorched;—thus surrounded in death by several of those whom he had taught in the Sunday school in life, and who, through his tuition, had been directed the most ready way—whether in the moment of peril or security—to "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." And

who can tell, in minds previously instructed and powerfully impressed with wholesome truth, what an "upward glancing of the eye" might effect, when the compassionate gaze of a Redeemer caught the last, piercing look of the sufferer—in which look the whole soul was lodged, and on its way upward! Joseph fell like a shepherd, solicitous for the safety of his flock, in the hour of danger; and near him lay, not only the boys, but the lamps which they had used for the purposes of their occupation, and which it had been one of his last acts to collect! Here they were literally "gathered together," in the language of Isaiah, "as prisoners are gathered in the pit," and though "shut up" in death, the hand that closed the door held the key of heaven.

Had not the shaft to which he was hastening been choked with timber, the possibility at least existed of deliverance; and this is one of the circumstances which render the death of so brave and humane a man so painful. When the progress downward was impeded by the timbers which had been shook out of their place by the explosion, the first expedient that occurred to Mr. Reay was, to secure a blacksmith's *anvil*, suspend it over the mouth of the pit, let it drop, and so force a passage to the bottom. But here two obstacles were presented; first, the possibility of some of the men being alive below, and being killed by its fall; and secondly, the

probability of dashing against the side of the cast-iron tubbing, so bursting it, and inundating the pit. It was not till one o'clock, therefore, on Monday morning, that the good old man was discovered; and when the writer saw him in his shroud and in his coffin, in his own house, on the forenoon of the same day, in company with Mrs. Reay and Mr. Leppington, he looked more like a venerable apostle placidly sunk into a state of slumber, than a person in the arms of death;—his excellent widow, surrounded by the family and friends in an adjoining room, mourning like a Christian, and meekly observing,—"It is kind of you to come to see me."

Taking a view of the solemn event, as a whole, it must be evident to all who are disposed to improve the subject, that God has arisen, on the occasion, out of his place, and intends it as one of his manifestations to the NEIGHBOURHOOD. The language of the prophet may be appropriately quoted, "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, who hath appointed it." The broad scale on which the work of destruction was carried on, is proof sufficient that God aimed at nothing short of general *impression;* and the conclusion is, that it should be succeeded by a general *reformation.* He has kindled a fire, and like Jerusalem of old, has "set" the neighbourhood "upon the coals;" but it is in order to purify it.

To the immediate *friends* and *relatives* of the sufferers, the divine Being speaks still more loudly. The voice of his judgments from afar, is, alas, but too often heard in soft whispers. *Distance* produces, both with regard to *time* and *place*, the same effect upon the *mind* that a remote sound has upon the *ear*. Hence, the destruction of a world by water—of the cities of the plain by fire—and of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram by a purposely wrought earthquake, can be read without emotion. But when God enters the *vicinity* in which we reside, or the *home* in which we live, then is certainly the time, above all others, for bowing with reverence while he is passing by in the storm, and for profiting by the traces he has left, whether of mercy or of judgment. He never speaks, but to be heard; never manifests himself, but to be seen; and this event calls for humiliation, resignation, watchfulness, and amendment.—"Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh!'

LIST OF SUFFERERS AND SURVIVORS.

(*See page* 118.)

AGE.	NAME.	HOW EMPLOYED.		WIDOW & CHILDREN.
62	Thos. Simpson	overman		widow 12
63	Joseph Lawson	deputy-overman		widow 10
56	William Crister	deputy-overman	father & son	widow 6
17	Wm. Crister, jun.	crane-man		..... —
35	John Robson	deputy-overman	father & son	widow 5
12	Andrew Robson	trapper		..... —
12	Matthew Usher	trapper		..... —
16	Peter Green	stone-stower		..... —
19	Luke Mason	putter	brothers	..... —
17	Peter Mason	putter		..... —
15	William Mason	putter		..... —
13	Robert Mason	putter		..... —
20	James Miller	putter		..... —
33	Martin Brown	hewer	brothers-in-law	widow 3
21	Robert Clark	putter		..... —
17	William Dinning	putter	brothers	..... —
12	Bateman Dinning	putter		..... —
67	Christopher Ovington, sen.	door-keeper	father & son.	 5
19	Christopher Ovington, jun.	putter		..... —
20	John Stanness	putter		..... —
12	John Reaveley	trapper		..... —
22	Edward Combey	putter	brothers	..... —
20	Robert Combey	putter		..... —
11	James Combey	trapper		..... —
22	Francis Bell	crane-man	brothers	..... —
19	Richard Bell	putter		..... —
16	William Bell	rolley-driver		..... —
13	Robert Bell	rolley-driver		..... —
20	John Gillis	putter		mother 3
8	Robert Roseby	trapper		..... —
15	John Lowry	attending davy lamps		..... —
43	Cuthbert Reaveley.	hewer	father & sons	..... —
20	John Reaveley	putter		widow 7
16	Thomas Reaveley	helper-up		..... —
12	John Hepple	trapper		.....
15	John Roseby	putter	brothers	..... —
10	Joseph Roseby	putter		..... —
15	Joseph Roseby	rolley-driver	brothers, cousins of the above	—
13	Christopher Roseby	rolley-driver		—
21	Henry Giles	putter	brothers	..... —
19	John Giles	putter		..... —
16	Andrew Giles	rolley-driver		..... —

AGE.	NAME.	HOW EMPLOYED.		WIDOW & CHILDREN.
12	Edward Combey	rolley-driver		..... —
19	John Buddle	putter	brothers	..... —
17	Michael Buddle	putter		..... —
14	Matthew Buddle	putter		..... —
17	Henry Appleby	putter	brothers	..... —
11	James Appleby†	trapper		widow —
72	Joseph Harbortle ...	trapper		..... —
13	Thomas Swan	rolley-driver		mother 5
15	Ralph Pendlington	rolley-driver		mother 3
14	Thomas Ellerton ...	attending davy lamps		.....
19	John English	putter		..... —
19	Roger Sharp	putter		..... —
18	Hutton Raite	putter	brothers	mother 3
13	Christopher Raite ..	putter		widow 8
53	William Thompson	sinker	father & son	..... —
13	James Thompson ..	driver		..... —
14	John Thompson	rolley-driver		..... —
19	George Kennedy	rolley-driver		widow 2
23	John Croser	hewer		..... —
12	Thomas Mason	trapper		..... —
9	Thomas Green	crane-man		widow 5
14	Thomas Reaveley .	hewer	father & son	..... —
31	John Reaveley	trapper		..... —
14	Thomas Moore	helper-up	brothers	..... —
12	James Moore	way-cleaner		..... —
11	Joseph Wright	putter		mother 4
29	John Chicken	putter		..... —
16	John Soulsby	way-cleaner	brothers	..... —
14	George Soulsby	trapper		widow 3
17	William Johnson ...	sinker		..... —
49	James Giles	putter		..... —
18	Edward M'Nay	putter		widow 10
75	Ralph Waggott	trapper		widow 3
31	Matthew Soulsby ..	onsetter		..... —
9	George Kyle	trapper .....,		mother 3
21	John Waggott	putter		..... —
18	John Hall	putter	brothers	..... —
11	George Hall	putter		..... —
10	Wanlas	trapper		mother 1
24	William Reay	hewer	brothers	widow 3
28	Andrew Reay	hewer		..... —
11	Thomas Huggup	trapper		mother 2
19	David Collins	putter		..... —
15	Luke Watson	trapper		..... —
14	Francis Haxon	trapper		..... —
20	James Cousin	putter		..... —
16	George Miller	putter	brothers	..... —
12	John Miller	trapper		.....

† This is the boy who, having finished his own work, bargained with another boy, who was anxious to visit the race course, to remain at work for him, as noticed p. 128

AGE.	NAME.	HOW EMPLOYED.	WIDOW & CHILDREN.
19	Thomas Sharp	putter	mother 2
19	Edward Bell	helper-up	..... —
16	Ralph Waggett	driver	brothers ..... —
14	John Ch. Waggett	driver	..... —
17	William Patrick	trapper	brothers ..... —
15	David Patrick	trapper	..... —
21	Robert Wilkinson	trapper	brothers ..... —
17	William Wilkinson.	rolley-driver	..... —
13	Robert Dawson	trapper	..... —
15	Percival Reed†	way-cleaner	brothers ..... —
13	John Reed	way-cleaner	.....

† John Reed, the father of the above boys, was one of the four got out of the mine alive, and who, as noticed page 152, had his leg amputated.

SUMMARY.

Total number of men and boys dead	102
Remaining alive	3
	—105
Women deprived of their husbands	17
Widowed mothers deprived of their sons	8
Number of children under the age of 14 left fatherless	48
Total left unprovided for	—73

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper proces
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2005

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